

Hafa Adai!

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\$1

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Casino chips, roulette wheels among items to be sold in 3rd IPI auction

By BEN BLASCHKE
INSIDE ASIAN GAMING

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posting, see link at the end of article.

The third in a series of auctions selling off casino equip-

ment previously owned by Saipan's Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC will take place this Friday, with casino chips and roulette wheels

among the items available.

The auction, to take place as a closed bid, will include almost the entire chip inventory of the casino at Impe-

rial Palace-Saipan, bringing into question the company's claims that it could restart casino operations within a month should the Com-

monwealth Casino Commission lift its license suspension.

IPI, which owes around US\$24 million to creditors
See IPI on Page 4

FBI, IRS allegedly uncover money laundering scheme

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation unit have allegedly uncovered a long-ongoing money laundering, wire transfer, and tax evasion schemes within the CNMI involving local political figures and the company that owns the CNMI's exclusive gaming license.

See FBI on Page 4

Benedict XVI, reluctant pope who chose to retire, dies at 95

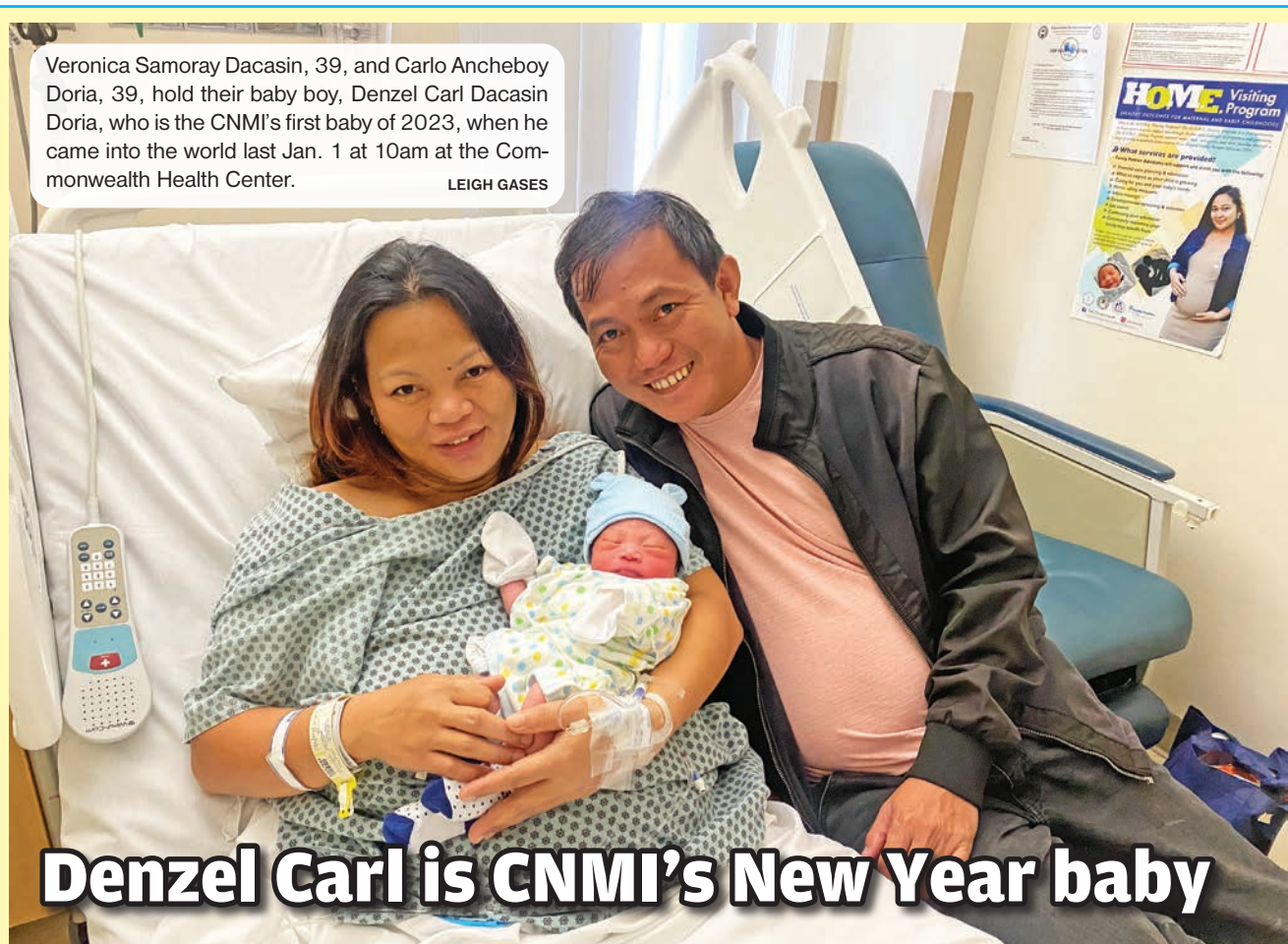
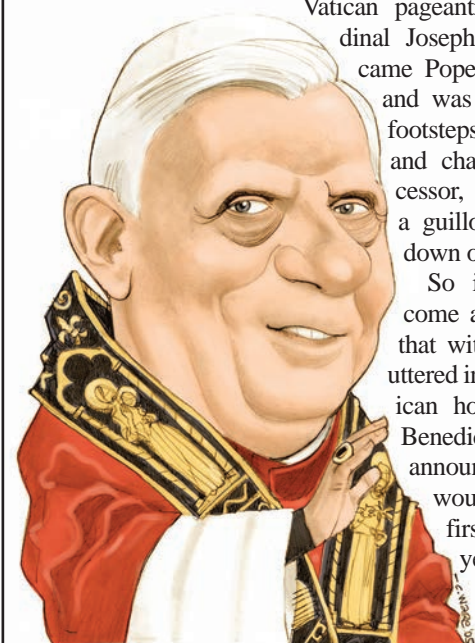
By NICOLE WINFIELD
ASSOCIATED PRESS

VATICAN CITY (AP)—He was the reluctant pope, a shy bookworm who preferred solitary walks in the Alps and Mozart piano concertos to the public glare and majesty of

Vatican pageantry. When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI and was thrust into the footsteps of his beloved and charismatic predecessor, he said he felt a guillotine had come down on him.

So it should have come as little surprise that with a few words uttered in Latin on a Vatican holiday in 2013, Benedict ended it all, announcing that he would become the first pope in 600 years to resign.

See POPE on Page 4



Veronica Samoray Dacasin, 39, and Carlo Ancheboy Doria, 39, hold their baby boy, Denzel Carl Dacasin Doria, who is the CNMI's first baby of 2023, when he came into the world last Jan. 1 at 10am at the Commonwealth Health Center.

LEIGH GASES

Denzel Carl is CNMI's New Year baby

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Denzel Carl Dacasin Doria, is the CNMI's first baby of 2023.

His parents, Veronica Samoray Dacasin, 39, and Carlo Ancheboy Doria, 39, rang in the New Year with their baby boy when he came into the world last Jan. 1 at

10am at the Commonwealth Health Center.

Veronica Dacasin was admitted into the Labor and Delivery unit at around 7pm on Dec. 31 and, after more than

15 hours of grueling labor, her healthy baby boy graced the world with his presence by way of normal delivery.

He weighed in at 5 lbs
See DENZEL on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Pizzeria Bar & Grill is one of the must-try dining places on the southernmost island of the CNMI.

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OVERDRIVE

Experts at Edmunds have gathered six vehicles with notable spa-like features for a blissful drive.

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LIFE & STYLE

Barbara Walters, the intrepid interviewer, anchor and TV news superstar, has died. She was 93.

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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Local

Saipan, Guam musicians to hold concert at Hyatt

Musicians from Saipan and Guam will be performing in a concert at the Hyatt Regency Saipan this Jan. 7, 2023.

The concert—called “Marianas Friendship Concert: Uniting the Marianas Through Music”—will feature the Marianas High School’s Rhythm ‘N Harmony Glee Club, piano soloists from the Yonsei Academy (Saipan), the Saipan Pacific Winds Concert

Band, and the award-winning Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra from Guam, which will be performing on Saipan for the first time.

The concert will conclude with a massed ensemble composed of musicians from the Saipan Pacific Winds and the Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra.

Leading up to the Jan. 7 concert, the Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra will be visiting local

schools on Saipan.

Who’s who in the cast

■ Marianas High School Rhythm ‘N Harmony Glee Club is an award-winning student led vocal ensemble established in 2010 at MHS. The ensemble is a very active contributor to the performing arts community in the CNMI by participating in various local events including *Saipan Got*

Talent, various local musical theater productions and civic ceremonies. They have represented the CNMI abroad at International Thespian Competition (Nebraska) rating *Superior* and at the Tumon Bay Music Festival (Guam) where they have won gold awards, been chosen as the *Judges’ Choice* and also the recipient of the festival’s Sweepstakes Award several times. The



Musicians from Saipan and Guam will be performing in a concert at the Hyatt Regency Saipan this Jan. 7, 2023. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

group is student led by Mylan Goodwin.

■ Yonsei Academy (Saipan) is a private piano studio in Finasisu that has been led by its current director and owner, Ji-hye Yun. The studio’s current enrollment consists of 38 students from grades 1 to 12. The Jan. 7 concert will feature two piano soloists from the Yonsei Academy: Eric Lai (11th grade student at Grace Christian Academy) and Peter Peng (9th grade student at Agape Christian School).

■ Saipan Pacific Winds Concert Band, the CNMI’s

ARMATECH



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community concert band, was officially incorporated in April 2001. They trace their origins to efforts as early as 1988 when teachers and volunteers from Marianas High School, Seventh Day Adventist Clinic and the Northern Marianas College began performing in different venues throughout the Marianas led by founder and former Saipan resident William DeWitt. The current ensemble is composed of middle, high, and college students; working professionals and retirees with a huge passion for music. They provide ceremonial music for the annual Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies and perform at other civic events. Since 2017, the organization has hosted the Saipan Wind Band Festival.

■ Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra is Guam’s newest

See **HYATT** on Page 4

2023

HAPPY NEW YEAR

As we welcome in the New Year,
let’s explore all the new ways we can give love.

Give a helping hand to someone in need.

Give your time to a cause you believe in.

Give inspiration and tag us at @bankofguam.

give Love

Bank of Guam 50

Member FDIC

JOB OPENING: ACCOUNTANT EUCON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The Accountant, receiving general guidance from the school's Finance Manager: Is responsible for performing the operational functions of the school's accounting office in planning, organizing, and conducting all accounting operations and the school's administrative Internal Audit. The accountant ensures timely accounting reporting to the Finance Manager. The accountant adheres to accepted accounting principles and performs management and complex accounting duties with a high level of independence and professional discretion.

Must have a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy degree with at least five years of progressive work experience as an Accountant.

Work Location: Eucon International School, Kulales Place, Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan.

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 500087, Saipan, MP 98950
E-Mail address: hr@eucon.edu

Expiration of local stimulus cards extended to Jan. 31

The deadline for the expiration of second local stimulus cards that the CNMI government issued last year has been extended to Jan. 31, 2023.

According to an advisory last Thursday by the Division of Revenue and Taxation, it said the Local Economic Impact Payment 2 stimulus

cards' deadline for expiration is now set for Jan. 31 and the cards will be deactivated and funds deposited to your local stimulus card will no longer be available on Feb. 1, 2023.

Taxpayers are encouraged to spend remaining funds within the allowable time frame.

"If you have been advised

'Warrantless search constitutional as defendant consented to search'

The CNMI Supreme Court has reversed the suppression of DNA evidence in *Commonwealth v. Kaipat*, 2022 MP 9, saying the defendant voluntarily agreed to the extraction of DNA sample.

In an opinion issued on Dec. 31, 2022, it said that because both the defendant and his parents provided voluntary consent to the search, the evidence should not be suppressed.

In this case, the defendant, then a juvenile, had presented himself to law enforcement as a victim of a crime. At the request of the police, he went with his parents to the police station to give a DNA sample, which law enforcement took without a warrant. After the DNA was tested, the Commonwealth charged the defendant with multiple crimes. The

Superior Court granted his motion to suppress the DNA sample and exclude it as evidence obtained through a violation of the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirement. The Commonwealth had argued that no warrant was required because the defendant voluntarily consented to the search, but the Superior Court found no voluntary consent.

The Supreme Court found that there was no constitutional violation because both the defendant and his parents provided voluntary consent to giving the DNA sample. They had gone to the police station at the time and date discussed and never objected. The defendant did not provide evidence showing that he or his parents had acted under duress or coercion. (PR/Saipan Tribune)

that your card was mailed to you but have not yet received your card within a reason-

able time, please call DRT as your stimulus card may have been returned to our office.

A valid photo I.D. and social security card is required to release the card to the autho-

rized cardholder," the DRT advisory states.

For more information, contact the DRT office at 664-1040. (Saipan Tribune)

SCS hosts 10th customer appreciation raffle

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Computer Services, a computer-oriented corporation that retails, service, and maintains computers, hosted its 10th Customer Appreciation Raffle Promotion last Saturday at the SCS store in Beach Road to cap off 2022.

SCS customers received one raffle ticket for every \$25 purchase and were put in a raffle draw for a chance to win a pool of prizes, advertisements, and others worth between \$8,000 and \$12,000.

Among the raffle prizes given to lucky customers were an Apple 24" Mac, LG 55" 4K LED HDTV, Sony Playstation 5, Canon Rebel t100 DSLR camera, Samsung Galaxy A7 tablet, Levoit Core Air Purifier, Google Nest Hub Max, Lenovo Smart Clock with Charging Hub, and 9 \$25 SCS Gift Certificates.

SCS will be contacting the winners of the raffle prizes directly.

Jerry Tiu, business development director of SCS, said,



DONNA LIWAG RIVERA

Saipan Computer Services staff, along with Jerry Tiu, business development director, front, second from left, pose with their raffle prizes during the 10th Customer Appreciation Raffle Promotion held on New Year's eve, last Saturday at the SCS store in Beach Road.

"This raffle promo is our way of giving back to our customers, whose confidence, support and continued patronage sustains our company's motto 'Service Beyond The Sale.' ...As the first computer sales and services company of the CNMI, thank you for your continued trust and support."

The Customer Appreciation Raffle Promotion started in 2011 with a brief hiatus in

2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As almost everything else came to a grinding halt, we felt it prudent to suspend the promotion during the height of the pandemic so as not to create any unnecessary hype. We were putting our focus more on social distancing, masking and the other health protocols. The safety of the customers, the crew and, of course, the

general public became the primordial concern during those times. And if I may add, the CNMI government did a great job of handling the whole pandemic. We in the CNMI are blessed and fortunate that the face masks were not tainted by any political color. We are so lucky that the residents of the islands came together against this particular health issue," added Tiu.

As we usher in the year 2023,
we stand firmly together with
the people of the CNMI
in hopeful expectation.



Service Beyond The Sale...

Thank you.
Your trust and patronage sustains our
... Service Beyond the Sale ...

- from the staff and management -

Scheduled power service interruption tomorrow

There will be a scheduled power service interruption on Jan. 4, 2023, as the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. continues its ongoing system maintenance.

■ Time: 8:30am to 2:30pm

□ Area(s) affected: HANMI Hardware in Garapan.

■ Momentary power service interruption time: 8:30am to 9am and 2pm to 2:30pm

□ Area(s) affected: Garapan and Upper MIHA Housing.

□ Traffic Light(s) Affected: China Town Traffic Light.

WEATHER ADVISORIES

Danger: Indo-Pacific man-o-war

The public is being warned about the presence of Indo-Pacific man-o-war jellyfish in all beaches and surf zones of the Marianas. A beach hazards statement is now in effect through Wednesday afternoon.

Contact with Indo-Pacific man-o-war, alive or dead, can cause extreme pain and may be fatal in some cases.

Man-o-war have been reported washed up on north facing beaches in Guam, including Tarague Beach. Men-o-war may still be found on beaches and the waters of the Marianas.

Remain out of the water to avoid hazardous swimming conditions. **(PR)**

Rip currents until Wednesday

Vatican at age 95. Francis himself will celebrate Benedict’s funeral Mass on Thursday, to which only Italy and Germany were asked to send official delegations, closing out an unprecedented chapter in the history of the papacy with a reigning pope eulogizing a retired one.

The intellectual German theologian, whose mission was to reawaken Christianity in a secularized and indifferent Europe, was forced to shoulder the brunt of the sex abuse scandal that festered unattended under St. John Paul II. Then, as he planned to make a quiet exit from the papacy, another scandal erupted when his own butler stole his personal papers and gave them to a journalist—leading to revelations that laid bare the need for a reformer pope to clean up the Vatican’s act.

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through Wednesday afternoon along east facing reefs of the Marianas.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

POPE

From Page 1

His dramatic exit paved the way for Pope Francis’ election and created the unprecedented arrangement of two popes, living side-by-side in the Vatican gardens. And it likely won’t be a one-off, given that Francis has said Benedict “opened the door” for other popes to follow suit.

Francis praised Benedict in comments on Saturday during a New Year’s Eve service held at St. Peter’s Basilica.

“Only God knows the value and the strength of his intercession, of his sacrifices offered for the good of the Church,” Francis said.

The Vatican announced that Benedict died Saturday at his home in the

In between crises, Benedict pursued his single-minded vision to rekindle faith in a world that he frequently lamented seemed to think it could do without God.

“In vast areas of the world today, there is a strange forgetfulness of God,” he told 1 million young people gathered on a vast field for his first foreign trip as pope, World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, in 2005. “It seems as if everything would be just the same even without Him.”

He echoed that theme in his final will released by the Vatican on Saturday night, urging the faithful especially in his homeland to “stand firm in the faith!” Two pages in length and dated 2006, the will also touched on a theme dear to his heart of the beneficial dialogue between faith and reason.

FBI

From Page 1

The U.S. government, through the U.S. Attorney’s Office, filed last Dec. 30, 2022, a complaint for forfeiture with the U.S. District Court for the NMI for the over \$310,000 the court previously seized from a Bank of Saipan account held in the name of “MCS.”

“MCS” is a consultancy company whose head, A.Y, is believed to have been actively involved in the recently discovered money laundering and wire fraud schemes uncovered by the FBI and IRS-CI within the CNMI involving local political figures and what the complaint states as the company that was awarded the CNMI’s exclusive gaming license, presumably referring to Imperial Pacific International CNMI LLC. The complaint did not directly name IPI but it is the only casino license holder in the CNMI. According to the

complaint filed by attorneys Shawn Anderson Jessica F. Wessling, Eric O’Malley, and Mikel Schwab, the United States filed this civil action to forfeit over \$310,000 “defendant funds” seized by the District Court from the “MCS” bank accounts because, following an investigation by the FBI and the IRS-CI, it is believed that the proceeds may have come from/or were used in wire fraud and money laundering schemes involving foreign entities and individuals in the CNMI.

“In the first scheme, defendant funds were transferred in a way that was necessary to enable a fraud upon a government regulatory authority, namely the Commonwealth Casino Commission. In the second scheme, defendant funds were part of and necessary to a long-running and expansive effort to improperly influence government officials for the purpose of obtaining preferential treatment. Finally, A.Y. and MCS used defendant funds to claim false

expenses, thus fraudulently reducing tax liability to the CNMI, when in fact those amounts were reimbursed to A.Y,” said the complaint.

According to the complaint, beginning in 2013, the owners and operators of the “company,” presumably IPI and its mother company, IPI Holdings, established relationships with CNMI political figures by sponsoring foreign trips via private jet.

Following the trips, the participating political figures joined other members of the CNMI Legislature to pass a bill that enabled an exclusive gaming license on Saipan. The bill was signed into law in March 2014. However, procedural violations that deprived the public of required notice and other defects resulted in two subsequent bills to correct the errors. The final bill was signed into law in July 2014.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

HYATT

From Page 2

award-winning community youth orchestra composed of youth musicians from Harvest Christian Academy, Saint John’s School, the Guam Department of Education, the Department of Defense Education Activities, University of Guam, Mount Carmel School (Saipan) and the community-at-large. They perform an eclectic repertoire that spans from the Baroque period to

the latest theatrical soundtrack. They are excited to travel to Saipan and are eager to share their music.

A portion of the concert proceeds will go to music programs on Saipan.

Concert information

■ **Location:** Hyatt Regency Saipan Ballroom (former Sandcastle)

■ Doors open at 5pm; concert begins at 5:30pm.

■ Cost: Tickets: \$15 - \$275

■ Online ticket sales: <https://guamphilharmonic.ticketleap.com/>

marianas-friendship- concert-new-years-edition/

■ For table reservations, visit www.guamphilharmonic.org, and click on the concert flyer.

■ For more information, visit: www.guamphilharmonic.org, email: info@guamphilharmonic.org or call (toll free) 844-487-4364

■ On Saipan, contact the Saipan Pacific Winds: email: saipanpacificwinds@gmail.com or text 670-287-2279 (text only). **(PR/Saipan Tribune)**

■ Purpose: To relocate existing concrete pole and primary lines in front of Sugar King Park.

■ Water wells affected: None

■ Wastewater facility affected: Wastewater bypass will be monitored, however, no areas affected.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). **(PR)**

The public is advised to stay out of the water along east facing reefs. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don’t swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. Remain out of the water to avoid hazardous swimming conditions. **(PR)**

Small craft advisory in effect

A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6pm Wednesday. This means conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State

Warning Point, northeast winds of 15 to 20 knots, with frequent gusts of up to 25 knots are present in Marianas coastal waters until 6pm Wednesday. Passing fragments of a shear line and intensifying pressure gradient with subtropical ridge will keep winds elevated and hazardous to small craft across all of the Marianas through at least Wednesday afternoon. Seas may occasionally reach hazardous criteria near stronger outflow boundaries.

A small craft advisory means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft. Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions. **(PR)**

DENZEL

From Page 1

and 15 ounces, with a length of 48 cms, and a head circumference of 30.5 cms.

With his due date originally set for Jan. 10, Veronica Dacasin and Carlo Doria weren’t expecting their son to be born on New Year’s Day, but that it was a big “blessing” as they can simultaneously celebrate both the new year and the birth of their first child.

“I’m happy, it was hard, but it’s amazing. This is a blessing. When I saw my baby—I can’t explain it, but I’m very happy to see my son,” said Veronica Dacasin.

Brynna Lynch was the midwife; Dr. Michael Deary was Veronica Da-

casin’s doctor; and Dr. Amanda Hol-loway was the infant’s pediatrician.

According to CHC, Denzel was the only baby born on New Year’s Day.

When sought for information as to whether there were New Year babies born on Tinian and Rota, CHC registered nurse Lovely Lopez said that the clinics there do not have the adequate facilities for mothers to give birth in their respective islands, so they are flown to Saipan to deliver at the Commonwealth Health Center. Veronica Dacasin and Carl Doria live and work on Saipan.

In Guam, the United States welcomed its first baby, a girl named Eliana Celis, around 12:30am delivered by Dr. Thomas Shieh at the Guam Memorial Hospital. She weighed 4 lbs and 17.5 oz.

IPI

From Page 1

and more than US\$100 million to the CCC in unpaid fees, has tried to stop the auctions, arguing that it would be unable to reopen its casino—shuttered since March 2020—in quick time if its gaming equipment was sold.

However, their efforts have so far been in vain with two auctions already successfully held and a fourth planned for March 10.

Tim Shepherd, senior partner at receiver Clear Management Ltd., said he was pleased with the progress of the auctions so far, despite facing some unexpected challenges.

“A globally known Indian casino group with operations principally in Goa engaged us, bid, won quite a few Lots and then at that time ceased all communication,” Shepherd told IAG.

“I’ve never experienced a lack of professionalism like it and their bids won’t be welcome moving forward. It’s a tough enough process without time wasters.

“But aside from that group, all winning bidders from across the world have paid deposits quickly and we have been able to send out equipment within the last few weeks to them without a hitch. So it is all

going really smoothly and shows our marketing is working.

“Bidders can be comfortable knowing that what they bid for and win, they will get 100%. I send a big thanks to the CCC for facilitating that. They have been great to work with under what for them must be impossible circumstances.”

Shepherd said this week’s auction will also feature roulette wheels and more slot machines, including 12 of the popular Scientific Games (now Light & Wonder) link Duo Du Duo Cai.

The fourth auction in March will focus primarily on IPI’s remaining slot machine inventory.

“We are now working through 300-plus slot machines and there’s work to be done to clean and make them good so we get the best possible price for the equipment, which comes from Aristocrat, Light & Wonder, Konami and Aruze amongst others,” Shepherd said.

“The Bally system sits across all electronic gaming and will be removed for parts and sold separately.”

This was originally posted in the Inside Asian Gaming website: <https://www.asgam.com/index.php/2023/01/02/casino-chips-roulette-wheels-among-items-to-feature-in-third-ipi-auction/>



Bank of Guam wins 3 awards in video competition

HAGÁTÑA, Guam—Bank of Guam announced last Thursday that their 50th anniversary brand campaign, *Proud to Be*, has been awarded three Viddy Awards.

Proud to Be 50, one of a series of videos under the bank's 50th anniversary campaign, was recognized with two Platinum Viddy Awards under Branding Campaign and Culture/Lifestyle Short Form Video categories. *Proud to Be the People's Bank* television commercial received a Gold Viddy in the same category.

The *Proud to Be 50* and *Proud to Be the People's Bank* videos, along with other media deliverables, came together to create Bank of Guam's 50th anniversary campaign. Both short form videos featured vignettes of the people of the people's bank—their customers and employees. Through these vignettes, viewers had an opportunity to see [Bank of Guam's] people, celebrating who they are, their heritage, their future and their dreams.

"We'd like to think of ourselves as being in the business of storytelling. Everyone has a story and we believe the spots were a great reminder that Bank of Guam's story is inherently the same as all of our stories—a story with a vi-

» 50th anniversary campaign wins platinum

sion rooted in the same fundamental values that our diverse and ever-growing community shares. It was a privilege to work with Bank of Guam on their 50th anniversary project as well as the amazing cast that brought it to life and we look forward to what the future holds for Mighty Island and Bank of Guam," said Nia Serneo, producer, Mighty Island.

"The stories of our people are at the very heart of our business and our bank. For the past 50 years, their shared stories and experiences have shaped our communities, our business, our families and individual lives. And to be able to capture the voices and images of our people through video in a way that receives recognition on an international scale is an honor that we celebrate proudly as the people's bank," said Joaquin P. LG. Cook, president and chief executive officer of Bank of Guam.

The Viddy Awards, formerly the Videographer Awards, is one of the most coveted awards in the video industry. Since 1995, thousands of production and communication professionals from various in-

dustries have entered their best and most creative work. The goal of the Viddy Awards is to identify and recognize the video



Proud to Be 50, one of a series of videos under the Bank of Guam's 50th anniversary campaign, was recognized with two Platinum Viddy Awards by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

4.4-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 6:10am on Jan. 2, 2023, a report of a 4.4-magnitude earthquake occurred at 18.796°N 145.329°E in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning

Point at (670)-237-8000. (PR)

4.5-magnitude quake in Yap region

At 10:26pm on Dec. 29 2022, a report of a 4.5-magnitude earthquake occurred at 11.675°N 141.008°E in the state of Yap in the Federated States of Micronesia. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. (PR)

artisans who excel in the scope of their own environment. The Platinum Award is awarded to those projects that the judges deem are written, produced, shot and/or edited in an exceptional manner. The Gold Award is awarded for projects that exceed industry standards.

The Viddy Awards is administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and

Communication Professionals. The international organization consists of several thousand marketing, communication, advertising, public relations, media production, and freelance professionals who have entered AMCP programs.

To learn more about the Viddy Awards and for a complete list of 2022 winners, visit viddyawards.com. (PR)

World Resort partners with popular Korean YouTube personalities for autograph event

To ring in the new year 2023, Saipan World Resort is presenting a special event for the Saipan community. Saipan World Resort recently announced that they have invited popular YouTube personalities in Korea to hold autograph events at the hotel, which started yesterday, Jan. 2, and will last until Jan. 4, 2023.


The autograph event will feature personal appearances by famous Korean YouTubers such as Clever TV, MyLynn TV, MyMom TV, Ddua Dduji TV, Yekong, and Let's Play Yura meeting fans at Saipan World Resort. The autograph events will be held at Saipan World Resort's Oasis lounge starting at 7pm on Jan. 2 to Jan. 4.

Each day's autograph session will feature different personal appearances and signing autographs for the fans. Yes-

terday's event featured Ddua Dduji TV, and Yekong, MyLynn TV; MyMom TV and Let's Play Yura will be on Jan. 3, while Clever TV will be featured on Jan. 4. Each autograph session will start at 7pm and will last approximately one hour.

This event is being hosted by Saipan World Resort, with special thanks to the sponsor BC Card and their help in making this event possible.

"We are preparing a wide variety of events for visitors who wants to enjoy the warm Saipan hospitality," said Saipan World Resort chief executive officer Shi Hwan Kim. "Saipan World Resort is planning many more meaningful events in 2023 for both tourists and the local community to enjoy Saipan to the fullest." (PR)



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-23-009

SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF POWER DISTRIBUTION ANNUAL MATERIALS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified vendors for the Supply and Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials for Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set. CUC may award a contract to more than one firm for the materials, based on bids for "Commodity Groups".

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-23-009, Supply & Delivery of Power Distribution Annual Materials, Saipan, CNMI" to CUC Procurement & Supply Division, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Dandan, Saipan MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 19, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. An electronic copy of the entire submission is also required to be sent via email to CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email address, marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

A *Bid Guarantee* of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*


This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Invitation for Bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the bidder, awarded a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 29, 2022** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, CUC Senior Purchasing Technician via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org; Joseph Crisostomo, CUC Power Division Purchasing Technician via email joseph.crisostomo@cucgov.org and Alfred Palattao, Jr., CUC Power Division Engineer via email alfred.palattao@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID

CUC-IFB-23-012

Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites) in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies, and materials necessary for the removal and installation of GAC and Gravel media replacement, disposal of spent GAC and Gravel media, possible sample collection, transportation, and the possible supply of gravel media, analyses of spent media, and additional waste containers/drums for disposal, if necessary. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **\$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 28, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-23-012, Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2023**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Payment Bond of One Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 4, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

2 SBPA students receive scholarships from Camacho foundation



The Felix M. and Governor Carlos G. Camacho Scholarship Foundation awarded scholarships to Christian Quintanilla, a public administration senior; and Jean Bactad, an incoming junior pursuing a business degree, at the University of Guam.

The Felix M. and Governor Carlos G. Camacho Scholarship Foundation has awarded scholarships to two students at the University of Guam's School of Business and Public Administration.

Foundation representatives presented the scholarship awards to Christian Quintanilla, a public administration senior; and Jean Bactad, an incoming junior pursuing a business degree, and both are the first in their respective family to enter college.

Each of the recipients received \$1,000 and the foundation committed to providing the same amount per semester until they graduate.

Juggles two jobs, college

Quintanilla is thankful for the financial support, especially because he juggles two jobs in retail and food and beverage industries while working on getting his public administration degree.

"It will help a lot for school,"



Scholarship recipient Christian Quintanilla. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

Quintanilla said, as he's aiming to graduate next semester, and eyeing a law enforcement job while he explores ways to become an entrepreneur.

Quintanilla is breaking new ground, as he will be the first in his immediate family to earn a college degree.

His family has modest means, and he said he wants to show to his cousins, nieces, nephews and other relatives that college is achievable even when funding might be tight.

Housing affordability

Bactad, a business administration incoming junior, also aims



Scholarship recipient Jean Bactad. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

to become an entrepreneur.

Part of her upbringing was helping her parents, who are first-generation immigrants from the Philippines, make ends meet. She helped at their stall at the old flea market in Dededo before it was abolished.

After graduating, her dream ultimately will be to get into a real estate business that will help open avenues for housing affordability.

Besides the financial support, Bactad said the scholarship also boosts morale.

"It inspires me with the thought that people do care about my education," Bactad said.

The foundation also previously awarded a scholarship to another UOG student, Mia Isabella Nanpei, a senior pursuing a business degree in accounting who continues to receive help from the foundation.

Foundation history

When the late Felix Martinez Camacho started out as a carpenter in the 1940s, he had a vision that the sleepy farming village of Tamuning would develop into a hub for commerce.

Decades later, Tamuning transformed into one of the island's busiest. The Camacho Landmark Center, Personal Finance Center, Guam Premier Outlets, and other business landmarks sprouted in the area as the island rose from the ruins of World War II and eventually drew more than a million tourists a year and enticed investors.


When the Camacho patriarch was a carpenter, just after the war, he saved up his money and used his skills to fix up Quonset huts and former military barracks buildings in Tamuning so he could generate cash by renting them out. And that was part of the beginning of his entrepreneurial ventures, said one of his grandsons, Carlos P. Camacho.

With the business success of the Camachos in finance, real estate development, and other businesses, a foundation was established to help support college students who aim for success via a higher education.

The Felix M. and Governor Carlos G. Camacho Scholarship Foundation sees scholarship awards as a way of investing in Guam's future business professionals and entrepreneurs, said Carlos P. Camacho, the foundation's community relations manager.

The Guam business pioneer also is the father of Guam's first elected governor, Carlos Garcia Camacho, and the grandfather of Felix Perez Camacho, the island's 12th civilian governor.

"It's to continue the legacy; that's why we decided to invest in Guam's future," the foundation's representative said. (PR/Saipan Tribune)



COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID

CUC-IFB-23-003

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF MEDIUM-DUTY BOOM TRUCK VEHICLE

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of a medium-duty boom truck for the Power Plant in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-23-003, Supply and Delivery of a Medium Duty Boom Truck"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time or post-marked before the submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on December 19, 2022**, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with copies to Jubal Slayer, CUC's Technical Manager for Oil via email at jubal.slayer@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

(THIS IS AD IS PAID FOR NMHC WITH HUD FUNDS)

NMHC RFP 2023-002

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: February 03, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Architect-Engineer Services for the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program Infrastructure Projects

The RFP packet is available on January 03, 2023, online at www.nmhcgov.net and at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com by clicking on the "Procurement Tab". All interested firms shall submit their intent to participate via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All inquiries questions or requests for clarification must be submitted in writing to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or submitted by facsimile to (670)234-9021, no later than 10:00 AM local time on January 16, 2023.

This procurement is in accordance with the NMHC Procurement Regulations. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with NMIAC §100-60-210 (Competitive Sealed Proposals) of the NMHC Procurement Regulations. To also include the provisions of NMHC Procurement Regulations, NMIAC Section §100-60-725 & § 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent fees shall apply.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC)

/s/
Merced M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

As COVID infections surge in China, the things we can take away

Few countries can be said to have truly responded adequately to the deadly threat of the coronavirus, and ours certainly isn't near the top, with a poisonous fixation on individual liberty that shot even basic collective efforts to ward off the crisis.

Neither is the originator of the virus, China, for the opposite reason. The country's Communist Party dictatorship tried brute force to defeat the virus with the "Zero-COVID" strategy, characterized by heavy-handed lockdowns that kept people constrained to their homes, sometimes without the ability even to buy food, and the government's now distinctive penchant for mass surveillance.

Like keeping the pressure on a wound without actually treating it, the strategy could only delay the deterioration, and the time of reckoning has come. Nearly three years in, after countries around the world have been battered by COVID-19, it is China again in the center of the maelstrom, with an exploding catastrophe in the form of hundreds of thousands of

totalitarian control,
no matter how badly
one wills it, is an
unattainable goal

infections overwhelming an already-beleaguered health system as the government seems to exasperatedly wash its hands of the whole thing.

Countries including the U.S. are again imposing travel restrictions, and the administration of President Xi Jinping seems at a loss about what to do as it watches the order it tried to force into being collapse in on itself, endangering its grand designs for an ever-more prominent place in the firmament of the global economy. Perhaps it should be yet another reminder that totalitarian control, no matter how badly one wills it, is an unattainable goal, and is more like a mirage that will lure you out to your demise.

This illusion will, sadly, cost tens or hundreds of thousands of Chinese lives, just as our own flavor of self-delusion cost so many American ones. Let's let these tragedies mean something by at least learning their lessons and pledging to never again let these weaknesses turn a threat into a full-blown cataclysm. It's too late for COVID-19, but it could save us in the crises to come.

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FAA should use real-life conditions for its evacuation standards

I imagine you're crammed into your middle seat—behind a crying baby, of course—and a wave of turbulence rocks the plane. Then another. Then that singular, ominous "ding" as the flight crew kindly urges—demands, really—that passengers return to their seat and buckle up. They're sorry for the inconvenience, but it's for your own safety.

Imagine, then, that the turbulence doesn't stop. It gets worse. People begin to panic. Somehow, though, miraculously, the pilots manage to safely land the plane. Sure, it's a rough landing, but at least you're on the ground.

You're relieved—until you realize it's not over. With your adrenaline racing, your heart pounding, the flight attendants shout that you have to evacuate without delay, as the fuel tanks might be damaged and could spark a fire at any moment.

Right now, Federal Aviation Administration regulations mandate that, in the event of an emergency, passengers must be able to evacuate an aircraft within 90 seconds—meaning that airlines must ensure that there is enough room between seats and rows that everyone can deplane within a minute and a half.

But in the chaos and terror of this emergency, can more than 150 passengers sandwiched into crowded rows actually safely evacuate in less time than it takes to brush your teeth?

In 2018, Congress directed the FAA to establish a minimum seat size and seat pitch for passenger safety. The FAA's evacuation simulations found that "seat size and spacing did not adversely affect the success of emergency evacuations." However, its simulations ignored something important: the reality of flying in America today.

The FAA tests included only able-bodied adults younger than age 60, ignoring the millions of Americans like me who live and fly with a disability or other mobility issues. Ignoring older folks, who may take a little longer to get down the aisle but who fly regularly. Ignoring young children and infants, who rely on Mom or Dad to get from point A to B. And ignoring anyone who might struggle to understand flight attendants' instructions, including those who don't speak English fluently.

According to CBS News, the tests didn't even include common obstacles that could potentially slow down an evacuation, such as carry-on bags.

Test subjects were also reportedly in groups of 60, suggesting that many seats were left empty. In the real world, airplanes are packed—especially now, during the bedlam of holiday travel season. A Boeing 737 Max 8, for example, typically seats between 162 to 178 passengers.

How likely does it seem to you that the next plane you get on

By **TAMMY DUCKWORTH**

Chicago Tribune

Tammy Duckworth is a Democratic U.S. senator from Illinois.



won't have any children or seniors on board? What are the odds that no one will have brought with them a backpack or purse? And what are the chances that this childless, carry-on-free flight will also have a whole bunch of empty seats? I've never been on a commercial flight like that, and I'd bet not many others have either. Yet that is what the FAA opted to test.

To his credit, then-FAA Administrator Steve Dickson conceded that these recent simulations provide "useful, but not necessarily definitive information regarding the effects of seat dimensions on safe evacuations for all populations."

While the concession is appreciated, the point—and the problem—remains clear: The flying public deserves better.

That is why this month, Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin and I introduced the Emergency Vacating of Aircraft Cabins (EVAC) Act. If passed, it would require the FAA to finally establish evacuation standards that consider not just seat size, pitch and configuration but also other real-life conditions such as the presence of carry-on bags and passengers of different heights, weights, ages and abilities. Already, this bill has been endorsed by everyone from the Allied Pilots Association and the AARP to the American Academy of Pediatrics, flight attendants and Capt. Chesley Sullenberger. Sullenberger, a retired pilot, knows a thing or two about evacuating commercial aircraft after he had to do so himself following a harrowing emergency water landing.

I know that this is a complicated business and that there are many well-intentioned, deeply intelligent people at the FAA and across the aviation industry who have dedicated an incredible amount of time and talent to this work. And going forward, we are going to need all of their expertise to get this right. But it is critically important that we do, in fact, get this right.

It should not, it cannot, take another tragedy to bring our aircraft evacuation standards up to date. Now is the time we must act to make flying as safe as we know it can be—and as safe as Americans deserve.

The pandemic drinking binge just keeps going

The arrival of COVID-19 and the societal disruptions that accompanied it understandably drove a lot of Americans to drink. But even as life has returned to more or less normal this year, the drinking binge has continued—which isn’t great news for anybody other than the makers and sellers of alcoholic beverages.

The consumer spending statistics compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis are the timeliest estimates of alcohol consumption available. They show November’s spending on alcoholic beverages, adjusted for inflation and seasonal spending patterns, to have been 3% higher than a year earlier and 15% higher than just before the pandemic. (1)

Does that really mean Americans are drinking 15% more? Well, maybe. Consumers have been moving for years toward higher-quality, more expensive beer, wine and spirits, which implies that they may not have increased the quantity of their alcohol purchases by quite that much. On the other hand, restaurants’ and bars’ share of overall alcoholic beverage spend-

ing is still slightly lower than before the pandemic; given the big markups they charge on drinks, consumption could also be up by even more than spending. The annual consumption estimates published by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism are available only through 2020, and they show a 3% per-capita increase in alcohol consumption that year, even as real spending on alcoholic beverages declined 3% because so many bars and restaurants were closed.

These statistics also show alcohol consumption in 2020 to have been the highest since 1990. Drinking declined sharply in the 1980s and 1990s, with hard liquor falling out of favor and beer consumption beginning a slower decline. The beer decline continues, but distilled spirits have made a big comeback.

This comeback was in part a revival of cocktail culture and craft distilling, which is hard not to view in a somewhat positive light. There are four times as many distilleries in the U.S. as there were in 2001, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and almost four times as many people working at them. High-end drinks that people generally don’t drink in huge quantities have led the way—from 2016 to 2021, the volume of super-premium spirits sold in the U.S. rose 77% while that of value brands rose 23%, reports the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

But there is clear evidence that more people are drinking too much. Deaths from alcohol-induced causes rose from 39,043 in 2019 to 54,258 in 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the population-adjusted death rate is now more than double what it was in the 2000s.

The rise in drug-induced deaths has been much, much worse—going from 6.9 per 100,000 population in 1999, less than the alcohol-induced rate, to 33.8 in 2021. Provisional data also show an encouraging decline in alcohol-induced deaths in the first half of 2022, although that trend could change as final numbers become available. Even after the big increases of the past couple of years, U.S. alcohol consumption likely still lags that of many affluent countries, especially in Europe (the most up-to-date international numbers available are from 2019). And yes, Americans drank lots more back in the 1970s—not to mention the 1830s, when estimated per-capita consumption was nearly three times what it was in 2020.

Of all the things one can worry about, then, America’s current drinking binge maybe shouldn’t be at the very top of the list. But it deserves more attention than it has been getting. The alcohol-induced deaths statistics understate the true toll: The CDC estimates that the number of deaths from cancer, heart disease, homicide and other causes that are attributable to excessive alcohol use is several times higher than the official alcohol-induced number, and over-imbibing has plenty of costs short of death.

One study published in the American Journal of Preventive

By **JUSTIN FOX**
Bloomberg Opinion

Justin Fox is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering business. A former editorial director of Harvard Business Review, he has written for Time, Fortune, and American Banker. He is author of The Myth of the Rational Market.



Medicine estimated the cost of excessive drinking in 2010 at \$249 billion in lost productivity, additional health care and other charges, an amount equating to \$2.05 per drink or \$807 per person. In 2019 a quarter of U.S. adults surveyed reported that they had engaged in binge drinking (four or more drinks within two hours for a woman and five or more for a man) in the past month, a share that has surely risen since. The increase in drinking since then has been most pronounced among women and Black Americans, which may concentrate and intensify some of the ill effects.

This calls for a government-policy response, and there’s a pretty obvious one at hand. Not prohibition, but a reversal of the decades-long easing of alcohol taxation. Because federal excise taxes on alcohol are charged by the gallon, not as a percentage of price, and haven’t changed since 1991, they’ve fallen a lot in real terms. By modestly increasing alcohol excise taxes now and indexing them to inflation for the future, Congress could discourage over-consumption and reduce the federal deficit by an estimated \$114.1 billion over the next decade.

On a personal level, our appropriate responses will surely vary. I participated (as a consumer) in that cocktail and craft distilling revival, drank too much in 2020 and early 2021, cut back sharply after that and then increased my intake again this holiday season. I’m not sure yet if it’s going to be a dry January or a demi-sec one, but change is coming.

(1) Because of the vagaries of the chain-weighted indexing methodology that the BEA uses in calculating real personal consumption expenditures, one technically shouldn’t add real spending categories together as I’ve done in the chart and rate-of-change calculations. That is, if you added together real spending in all the different spending categories, the sum wouldn’t equal total real consumer spending as estimated by the BEA, with the difference growing the farther you get from the indexing base year (in this case 2012). Because I’m adding together just a few related categories, and not getting more than a decade away from 2012, the distortion here should be small. But I figured I should attach a warning label.

Seasonal Sonnet Parodies

LITERARY NOOK

By **JOEY ‘PEPE BATBON’ CONNOLLY**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

I’ll be a Poem for Christmas

I’ll be a poem for Christmas
You can count my syllables for free
All I want for Christmas is free verse poetry
Dashes in a row, ballads by Batbon ring
A poem I already am, don’t need poetry slam
Over the verses and through the words
To some Sonnet sensibility we go
My verse knows the way to show the play
That seasonal song wordsmithing brings
Adjectives we have heard on high
Some Adverbial phrases all in a row
Oh poem just right, rhymes are brightly shining
It is a night for merriment and mirth
Writing a poetic piece with worth
Singlesounds singlesounds doubled up by me
Oh what fun the sonnets done! sings Joey Connolly.

(Try and find these songs and lines parodied above:
1. *I’ll be home for Xmas,*
2. *All I want for Xmas is my my two front teeth*
3. *Dashing through the snow... bells on bobtails ring*
4. *Over the river and through the woods to grandmother’s house we go, my horse knows the way*
5. *Angels we have heard on high*
6. *Oh holy night, the stars are brightly shining*
7. *Jingle bells, jingle bells, oh what fun it is to ride.*

Sonnet Night, Syllables to Write

Sonnet night, some syllables to write
Blue ink flows on paper so white
Around the parody poetry flows
New holiday verses nobody knows
Some punny rhymes some funny prose
Plenty of paper there is no dearth
Poems full of merriment and mirth
Here comes Subjunctive Clause
Here comes Independent Clause
I’m dreaming of a Write Christmas
With all the happy rhymes I know
With not a good rhyme missing
And people actually read and listen
To hear some poetry read by Joe.

(Try and find these songs and lines parodied above:
1. *Silent Night*
2. *Here Comes Santa Claus*
3. *I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas...where treetops glisten and children listen to hear sleigh bells in the snow).*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Employee cannabis use

I’m writing because it’s vital that the public and employers need to know that everyone, including safety sensitive workers, should be able to use marijuana, unless you are a federally-paid employee. I do want to offer my sincere kudos to Ms. King-Hinds for even taking on the issue as most business owners and organizational leaders will only touch the thought of cannabis use in banning, instead of learning how to progress with society. I read about her government entity considering a “cannabis usage policy” that captured my interest and seeing the need for education.

What really got my attention was not so much about what was in the article but what wasn’t mentioned and consideration for the policy change. There was no mention of testing for “active marijuana” in a person’s system, which is really the future of marijuana testing as it can be used to test both safety sensitive and non-safety sensitive jobs. Some states (17 states) are already using active marijuana testing for state employees on a random basis. The only stipulation for employees not being able to use marijuana is that if their salary is being paid by federal money (federal jobs only), not necessarily the entity using federal funds.

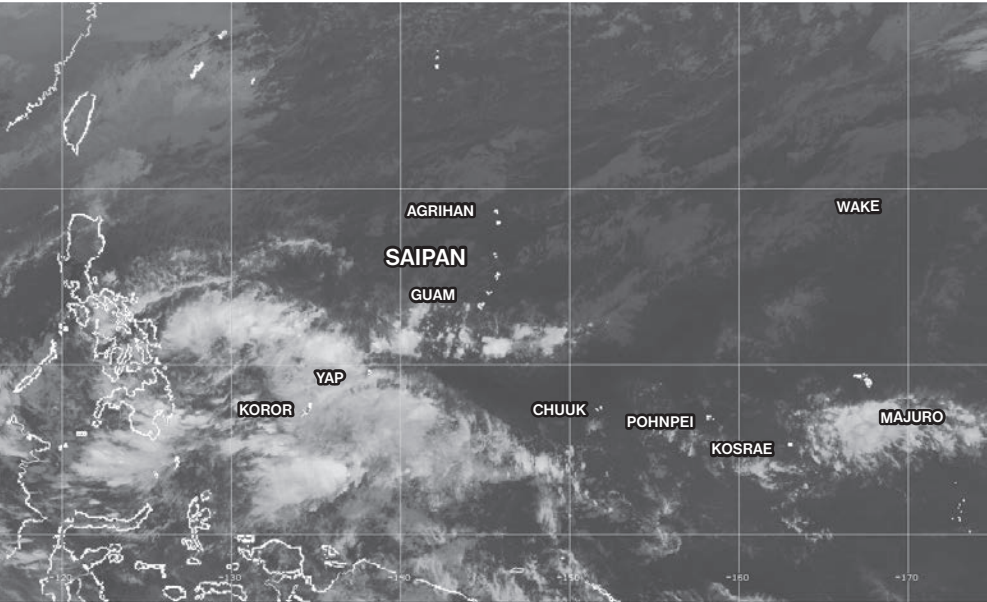
Most active marijuana test are calibrated at 12 hours, which means that as long as a person does not use marijuana 12 hours before testing, there shouldn’t be a problem even for safety sensitive jobs. Besides, every person with common sense shouldn’t holster a gun if they are high, nor drive a bus with kids onboard. But for example, should an employer decide to randomly test an employee, they shouldn’t apply the test until 10am, which means that that person could use marijuana up to 10pm the night before and not have to worry about failing the test. Of course, if they are using the morning before they come to work, then they will never pass the test, which is the purpose—to prevent people from being under the influence of marijuana while at work, regardless of their status, as testing is really that simple.

It’s truly time for the entire world to get over it when it comes to marijuana, especially when medical science has already told us that marijuana is safer than cigarettes and alcohol with no harm to one’s body. But some people have been indoctrinated to be against marijuana and it’s hard to get them to see the new reality. But I am hopeful the CNMI will embrace the change to allow for cannabis users, as we have an industry depending upon that very fact. But just think about it: We don’t hear about random tests for alcohol users on the worksite, not even for safety sensitive jobs, but we should! In fact, and if I had to choose, I would much rather trust a bus driver who just smoked than one who is drunk, as the smoker is only going to get a ticket for going to slow in the big cities. Smokers don’t kill but drunks do! It’s like everything else we experience new in life; we must learn how to live with marijuana being legal and I’m glad to see at least one government entity is up to the task.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman III, Saipan

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
Isolated showers. Partly sunny		Scattered showers. Partly sunny		A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny		Partly sunny		Partly sunny	
82°	77°	82°	77°	82°	77°	82°	77°	82°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 8:39 AM, MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Tinian and Saipan waters and scattered showers moving through the Guam and Rota waters. These showers are associated with a decaying and fragmenting shear line south of the islands. The buoys reveal combined seas of 7 to 9 feet, composed of a north swell and an east swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°	
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	82° / 76°	
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Scattered Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 78°	
Kosrae	Showers	83° / 78°	
Majuro	Scattered Thunderstorms	84° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	5:59 PM
Thursday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Saturday	6:44 AM	6:01 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:21 AM	2:56 PM
Wednesday	-	4:14 AM	3:41 PM
Thursday	-	5:08 AM	4:29 PM
Friday	-	6:01 AM	5:20 PM
Saturday	-	6:52 AM	6:13 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	72° / 66°	
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	38° / 17°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	65° / 58°	
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	81° / 67°	
London	Light Rain	53° / 52°	
Los Angeles	Showers	57° / 49°	
Manila	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°	
Melbourne	Clouds	66° / 56°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	80° / 73°	
New York	Partly Cloudy	56° / 46°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	51° / 38°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	50° / 48°	
Busan	Sunny	45° / 30°	
Rome	Cloudy	62° / 47°	
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	71° / 61°	
San Francisco	Rain	50° / 45°	
Seoul	Sunny	33° / 14°	
Tokyo	Sunny	49° / 35°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	63° / 48°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
6:45 AM	High Tide	1.42	
11:20 AM	Low Tide	1.07	
4:28 PM	High Tide	1.65	
-	-	-	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2023							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
OZ624/701	3:50PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
				OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:20PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	OZ623	9:00AM	2:20PM	3, 6
OZ624	3:50PM	7:40PM	3, 6	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS									
INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022									
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			TINIAN TO SAIPAN						
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY				
7:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.	(Except Sundays)	7:35 A.M.	7:50 A.M.	(Except Sundays)				
9:50 A.M.	10:05 A.M.		10:25 A.M.	10:40 A.M.					
4:00 P.M.	4:15 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)	4:35 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)				
SAIPAN TO ROTA			ROTA TO SAIPAN						
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY				
8:10 A.M.	8:40 A.M.		9:00 A.M.	9:30 A.M.					
1:45 P.M.	2:15 P.M.		2:35 P.M.	3:05 P.M.					
SAIPAN TO GUAM			GUAM TO SAIPAN						
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY				
11:10 A.M.	12:00 P.M.		12:30 P.M.	1:20 P.M.					
5:15 P.M.	6:05 P.M.		6:40 P.M.	7:30 P.M.					

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.									
FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022									
SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY		
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily	3101	9:30	10:00	Daily		
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun		
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun	3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri		
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily	3103	16:30	17:00	Daily		
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA					
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY		
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri	4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri		
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY		
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily		
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily		
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily	2104	10:30	10:45	Daily		
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily	2108	14:30	14:45	Daily		
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily	2109	15:30	15:45	Daily		
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily	2110	16:30	16:45	Daily		
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily	2111	17:30	17:45	Daily		

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Business

Pizzaria Bar & Grill

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SONGSONG, Rota—Pizzaria Bar & Grill is one of the must-try dining places on the southernmost island of the Northern Marianas chain.

Serving island residents and a smattering of tourists since 2001, the restaurant located in the heart of Songsong Village offers local, American, Mexican, Italian, and Filipino dishes and of course its best-selling pizzas.

Manager Jacqueline Manglona, who is the daughter of founders Rita and Joaquin Manglona, said all along Pizzaria Bar & Grill's goal is to give customers a pleasurable dining experience with incredible taste and a welcoming atmosphere.

And this mantra in running their restaurant has obviously worked as Pizzaria Bar & Grill has stood the test of time, weathering typhoons, economic crisis after economic crisis, and even the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We have been able to weather the pandemic through following safety protocols, availing any pandemic assistance provided for small businesses that we were qualified for, etc.," she said alluding to the most recent challenge that faced the CNMI.

Just recently, Pizzaria Bar & Grill was awarded a grant from the Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, or BOOST Program, and Manglona can't wait to use the money to improve the restaurant's operations.

"We plan to use the grant funds that were awarded to Pizzaria as we indicated in our application. These uses include restaurant facilities improvements, equipment, and furniture."



MARK RABAGO

Pizzaria Bar & Grill, located in the heart of Songsong Village on Rota, has been open since 2001.

Manglona said 2022 actually was a busy year for Rota's second longest operating restaurant, as the easing of COVID-19 restrictions on the island resulted in more of the community dining out.

"Pizzaria sales have actually improved since before the pandemic as we have increased our hours of operations, hired more employees, availed catering opportunities, etc."

Asked what items in the menu are often ordered, Manglona said aside from their best-selling pizzas, almost everything in their menu—from top to bottom—have been surefire hits.

"Pretty much everything on the menu is great, but items like the beef and broccoli, fried chicken, quesadillas, and crispy pata are very popular."

After their bout with the pandemic, Manglona said she and her staff are now facing the more usual challenges of any business like sourcing of goods, shipping, labor and labor retention, among others.

Aside from their lip-smacking delicious food, Pizzaria Bar & Grill has also become famous for their merchandise as tourists and former Rota residents just can't get enough of them.

"The merchandise we sell are popular items with the T-shirts being the No. 1 sellers. A separate company provides the merchandise that we sell. The idea of selling Rota merchandise at the restaurant is to provide customers with options to purchase souvenirs or gifts while they dine-in," said Manglona.

Pizzaria Bar & Grill is also a generous donor to events including local and church func-

casinos. From Dec. 23-27, the city saw a daily average of only 8,300 arrivals, according to police data. That's just 68% of November's level. The scene improved on New Year's Eve with 28,100 visitors entering the city that day, but that's only 66% of the level a year ago. The daily average was 108,000 in 2019, before the pandemic.

Air traffic outage in PH causes long flight delays

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Nearly 300 domestic and international flights at the Manila airport in the Philippines were either delayed, canceled or diverted Sunday, causing misery for over 65,000 passengers dur-

ing the New Year holiday after a power outage hampered air traffic operations.

Transportation Secretary Jaime J. Bautista in an evening news conference apologized for the inconvenience and said authorities are working to assist all affected passengers.

Bautista said the problem started in the morning, when the Air Traffic Management Center, which oversees all flights in Philippine airspace, lost communication, radio, radar, and internet because of the power outage.

The air traffic system was restored in late afternoon and flights resumed at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Manager Jacqueline Manglona, third from left, poses with staff of Pizzaria Bar & Grill.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pizzaria Bar & Grill's best-selling Around the World Pizza.

tions that it deems beneficial to the community.

"We also will be submitting our application to join as a member of the Rota Chamber of Commerce which will allow us to further help in improving the local community of Rota," she said.

Pizzaria Bar & Grill is open Sunday through Saturday from 10:30am to 10pm. The restaurant's phone number is (670) 285-3559. They also offer online ordering on their website, www.RotaPizzaria.com.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Macao eases COVID rules, but tourism, casinos yet to rebound

MACAO (AP)—Only a few tourists crisscrossed the wavy black and white paving of Macao's historic Senado Square on a recent weekday and many of the shops were shuttered.

The gaming hub on China's south coast near Hong Kong has endured some of the world's strictest anti-virus controls for nearly three years, and a loosening of border restrictions after China rolled back its "zero-COVID" strategy in early December is widely expected to boost its tourism-driven economy.

But for now, China's worst wave of infections so far is keeping away the hordes of high rollers who usually fill its

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

CUC-RAESP-23-004

A&E Design Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System Preliminary Engineering Report

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) for a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System on Tinian and Rota. The services shall include preparation of the PER as per USDA RUS Bulletin 1780-2.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division via email to marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org. The RAESP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office via email after registration.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAESP-23-004, A&E Services for Tinian Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System & Rota Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Collection System – Preliminary Engineering Report"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 a.m., (ChST) on January 18, 2023. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAESP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAESP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 28, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater, Engineer – via email, nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org; Larry Manacop, CUC Acting Chief Engineer at email larry.manacop@cucgov.org and Marcela Tenorio, Administrative Technician Senior – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Nation

Biden's new year pitch focuses on benefits of bipartisanship

CHRISTIANSTED, U.S. Virgin Islands (AP)—President Joe Biden and top administration officials will open a new year of divided government by fanning out across the country to talk about how the economy is benefiting from his work with Democrats and Republicans.

As part of the pitch, Biden and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell will make a rare joint appearance in McConnell's home state of Kentucky on Wednesday to highlight nearly \$1 trillion in infrastructure spending that lawmakers approved on a bipartisan basis in 2021.

The Democratic president will also be joined by a bipartisan group of elected officials when he visits the Kentucky side of the Cincinnati area, including Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear of Kentucky and Republican Gov. Mike DeWine of Ohio, the White House said.

Biden's bipartisanship blitz was announced two days before Republicans retake control of the House from Democrats on Tuesday following GOP gains in the November elections. The shift ends unified political control of Congress

Evacuation warnings amid flooding after California storm

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Residents of a Northern California community were ordered to evacuate ahead of imminent flooding, and evacuation warnings were in place elsewhere in rural parts of the region on New Year's Day after a powerful storm brought drenching rain or heavy snowfall to much of the state, breaching levees, snarling traffic and closing major highways.

Even after the storm moved through, major flooding occurred in agricultural areas about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Sacramento, where rivers swelled beyond their banks and inundated dozens of cars along State Route 99.

Emergency crews rescued motorists on New Year's Eve into Sunday morning and the highway remained closed. Crews on Sunday found one person dead inside a submerged vehicle near Route 99, Dan Quiggle, deputy fire chief for operations for Cosumnes Community Service District Fire Department, told The Sacramento Bee.

Sacramento County authorities issued an evacuation order late Sunday for residents of the low-lying community of Point Pleasant near Interstate



Traffic on the Brent Spence Bridge passes in front of the Cincinnati skyline while crossing the Ohio River to and from Covington, Ky., Oct. 7, 2014. AP

by Democrats and complicates Biden's future legislative agenda. Democrats will remain in charge in the Senate.

Before he departed Washington for vacation at the end of last year, Biden appealed for less partisanship, saying he hoped everyone will see each other "not as Democrats or Republicans, not as members of 'Team Red' or 'Team Blue,'

but as who we really are, fellow Americans."

The president's trip appeared tied to a recent announcement by Kentucky and Ohio that they will receive more than \$1.63 billion in federal grants to help build a new Ohio River bridge near Cincinnati and improve the existing overloaded span there, a heavily used freight

early Sunday to passenger vehicles with chains.

"The roads are extremely slick so let's all work together and slow down so we can keep I-80 open," the California Highway Patrol said on Twitter. Several other highways, including State Route 50, also reopened.

More than 4 feet (1.2 meters) of snow had accumulated in the high Sierra Nevada, and the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area said heavy, wet snow would cause major delays in chairlift openings. On Saturday, the resort reported numerous lift closings, citing high winds, low visibility and ice.

A so-called atmospheric river storm pulled in a long and wide plume of moisture from the Pacific Ocean. Flooding and rock slides closed portions of roads across the state.

Rainfall in downtown San Francisco hit 5.46 inches (13.87 cm) on New Year's Eve, making it the second-wettest day on record, behind a November 1994 deluge, the National Weather Service said. Videos on Twitter showed mud-colored water streaming along San Francisco streets, and a staircase in Oakland turned into a veritable waterfall by heavy rains.

route linking the Midwest and the South.

Congestion at the Brent Spence Bridge on Interstates

75 and 71 has for years been a frustrating bottleneck on a key shipping corridor and a symbol of the nation's grow-

ing infrastructure needs. Officials say the bridge was built in the 1960s to carry around 80,000 vehicles a day but has seen double that traffic load on its narrow lanes, leading the Federal Highway Administration to declare it functionally obsolete.

The planned project covers about 8 miles (12 kilometers) and includes improvements to the bridge and some connecting roads and construction of a companion span nearby. Both states coordinated to request funding under the nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure deal signed in 2021 by Biden, who had highlighted the project as the legislation moved through Congress.

McConnell said the companion bridge "will be one of the bill's crowning accomplishments."

DeWine said both states have been discussing the project for almost two decades "and now, we can finally move beyond the talk and get to work."

ACROSS THE NATION

Santos should consider resigning, veteran GOP lawmaker says

WASHINGTON (AP)—Even as the House GOP leadership keeps silent, a veteran Republican lawmaker said Sunday that George Santos should consider resigning after the congressman-elect from New York admitted to lying about his heritage, education and professional career.

Texas Rep. Kevin Brady, a former House Ways and Means chairman who has served in Congress for 25 years, told "Fox News Sunday" that Santos would have "to take some huge steps" to regain trust and respect in his district. Santos is set to be sworn in Tuesday when the new Congress begins.

"This is troubling in so many ways. Certainly, he's lied repeatedly," said Brady, who is retiring from the House. "He certainly is going to have to consider resigning." Brady said a decision about whether Santos steps down is one "to be made between he and the voters who elected him."

In November, Santos, 34, was elected in the 3rd Congressional District, which includes some Long Island suburbs and a small part of the New York City borough of Queens. He became the first non-incumbent, openly gay Republican to win a seat

to Congress. But weeks after helping Republicans secure their razor-thin House majority, Santos is now under investigation for fabricating large swaths of his biography. His campaign spending is also being scrutinized.

2 killed in New Year's Eve avalanches in Montana, Colorado

COOKE CITY, Mont. (AP)—Two people were killed in New Year's Eve avalanches in Montana and Colorado after heavy snow blanketed much of the West.

Forecasters with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center say two snowmobilers from Washington were headed uphill near Daisy Pass north of Cooke City, Montana, when one of them triggered a large slide and was swept about 600 vertical feet (183 vertical meters).

The buried rider, who was covered in 5 feet (152 centimeters) of snow, was wearing an avalanche airbag backpack, but it wasn't deployed. Both riders, whose names have not been released, had shovels and probes, but neither was wearing an avalanche beacon.

Another group of snowmobilers helped search for the missing rider and found his body about an hour later. The avalanche was about 2-4 feet (61-122 centimeters) deep, 500 feet (152 meters) wide and 600 feet (183 me-

ters) long. It broke on weak snow near the bottom of the snowpack.

Also Saturday, a father and his adult son were backcountry skiing near Breckenridge Ski Resort in Colorado when they were caught in an avalanche, according to the Summit County Rescue Group. The father was able to dig himself out, but his son was buried.

1 dead, 9 hurt in Alabama shooting near New Year's Eve party

MOBILE, Ala. (AP)—One person was killed and nine hurt in a shooting a few blocks away from where thousands were in the streets for a New Year's Eve party in downtown Mobile, Alabama, police said.

TV news footage showed police officers running and on horseback rushing to the area where the shooting took place about 45 minutes before midnight Saturday.

Neither the name of the person killed nor the conditions of the nine people taken to the hospital have been released by police.

The shooting happened a few blocks away from the main stage for the Moon Pie Over Mobile festival. The event continued on with fireworks and a moon pie dropping from a downtown building at midnight to mark the start of 2023.

Asia

Kim orders 'exponential' expansion of nuke arsenal

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered the “exponential” expansion of his country’s nuclear arsenal and the development of a more powerful intercontinental ballistic missile, state media reported Sunday, after he entered 2023 with another weapons launch following a record number of testing activities last year.

Kim’s moves are in line with the broad direction of his nuclear program. He has repeatedly vowed to boost both the quality and quantity of his arsenal to cope with what he calls U.S. hostility. Some experts say Kim’s push to produce more nuclear and other weapons signals his intention to continue a run of weapons tests and ultimately solidify his future negotiating power and win greater outside concessions.

“They are now keen on isolating and stifling (North Korea), unprecedented in human history,” Kim said at a recently ended key ruling party meeting, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

“The prevailing situation calls for making redoubled efforts to overwhelmingly beef up the military muscle.”

During the six-day meeting meant to determine new state objectives, Kim called for “an exponential increase of the country’s nuclear arsenal” to mass produce battlefield tactical nuclear weapons targeting South Korea. He also presented a task to develop a new ICBM missioned with a “quick nuclear counterstrike” capability — a weapon he needs to strike the mainland U.S. He said the North’s first military reconnaissance satellite will be launched “at the earliest date possible,” KCNA said.

“Kim’s comments from the party meeting reads like an ambitious — but perhaps achievable — New Year’s resolution list,” said Soo Kim, a security analyst at the California-based RAND Corporation. “It’s ambitious in that Kim consciously chose to spell out what he hopes to accomplish as we head into 2023, but it also suggests a dose of confidence on Kim’s part.”

Last month, North Korea

claimed to have performed key tests needed for the development of a new strategic weapon, a likely reference to a solid-fueled ICBM, and a spy satellite.

Kim’s identification of South Korea as an enemy and the mention of hostile U.S. and South Korean policies is “a reliable pretext for the regime to produce more missiles and weapons to solidify Kim’s negotiating position and concretize North Korea’s status as a nuclear weapons power,” Soo Kim said.

Later Sunday, South Korea’s Defense Ministry reiterated a warning that any attempt to use nuclear weapons by North Korea “will lead to the end of the Kim Jong Un government.” The U.S. military has previously made similar warnings.

“The new year started but our security situation is still very grave,” South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol told top military officers during a video conference. “Our military must resolutely punish any provocation by the enemy with a firm determination that we dare to risk fighting a battle.”



ASIAN BRIEFS

Court in Myanmar again finds Suu Kyi guilty of corruption

BANGKOK (AP) — A court in military-ruled Myanmar convicted the country’s ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi of corruption Friday, sentencing her to seven years in prison in the last of a string of criminal cases against her, a legal official said.

The court’s action leaves her with a total of 33 years to serve in prison after a series of politically tinged prosecutions since the army toppled her elected government in February 2021.

The case that ended Friday involved five offenses under the anti-corruption law and followed earlier convictions on seven other corruption counts, each of which was punishable by up to 15 years in prison and a fine.

The 77-year-old Suu Kyi has also been convicted of several other offenses, including illegally importing and possessing walkie-talkies, violating coronavirus restrictions, breaching the country’s official secrets act, sedition and election fraud.

Her previous convictions had landed her with a total of 26 years’ imprisonment.

Canada, Australia impose COVID rules on travelers from China

BEIJING (AP)—Australia and Canada have joined a growing list of countries requiring travelers from China to take a COVID-19 test prior to boarding their flight, as China battles a nationwide outbreak of the coronavirus after abruptly easing restrictions that were in place for much of the pandemic.

Australian health authorities said Sunday that from Jan. 5, all air travelers from mainland China, Hong Kong or Macao will need to show a negative COVID-19 test taken within two days of their departure.

Canadian authorities announced similar measures that will also come into effect Jan. 5 in a statement dated Saturday.

Australia and Canada join other countries including the U.S., U.K., India, Japan and several European nations in imposing tougher COVID-19 measures on Chinese travelers amid concerns over a lack of data on infections in China and fears of the possibility that new variants may spread.

Japanese emperor greets crowd at palace after COVID hiatus

TOKYO (AP)—Japan’s Emperor Naruhito and his fam-

ily waved to throngs of New Year’s well-wishers from the balcony at the Imperial Palace on Monday in the return of a celebration halted for the past two years by the pandemic.

Naruhito offered prayers for people’s happiness and world peace in the appearance Monday beside his wife, Empress Masako, and their daughter.

Princess Aiko, who turned 21 in December, was appearing in her first New Year’s public greeting. Legal adulthood is 20 in Japan and a condition for taking part in some events featuring the emperor’s family.

Also standing by was Emperor Emeritus Akihito, who abdicated in favor of his son in 2019, and his wife, Empress Emerita Michiko.

Naruhito noted the past few years had been filled with hardships brought on by the pandemic.

“These must have been hard times for many of you,” he told the crowd below, many waving small Japanese flags.

For the last two years, the emperor skipped the public greeting and instead sent video messages. Only those who applied and were selected in advance were allowed in the Imperial Palace grounds this year because of pandemic restrictions on large crowds.

World

Brazil’s Lula sworn in, vows accountability and rebuilding



Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva arrives to the Planalto Palace with a group representing diverse segments of society after he was sworn in as new president in Brasilia, Brazil, Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023. AP

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)—Brazil’s Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was sworn in as president on Sunday, and in his first address expressed optimism about plans to rebuild while pledging that members of outgoing Jair Bolsonaro’s administration will be held to account.

Lula is assuming office for the third time after thwarting far-right incumbent Bolsonaro’s reelection bid. His return to power marks the culmination of a political comeback that is thrilling supporters and enraging opponents in a fiercely polarized nation.

“Our message to Brazil is one of hope and reconstruction,” Lula said in a speech in Congress’ Lower House after signing the document that formally instates him as president. “The great edifice of rights, sovereignty and development that this nation built has been systematically demolished in recent years. To re-erect this

edifice, we are going to direct all our efforts.”

Sunday afternoon in Brasilia’s main esplanade, the party was on. Tens of thousands of supporters decked out in the red of Lula’s Workers’ Party cheered after his swearing in.

They celebrated when the president said he would send a report about the prior administration to all lawmakers and judicial authorities, revoke Bolsonaro’s “criminal decrees” that loosened gun control, and hold the prior administration responsible for its denialism in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We do not carry any spirit of revenge against those who sought to subjugate the nation to their personal and ideological designs, but we are going to ensure the rule of law,” Lula said, without mentioning Bolsonaro by name. “Those who erred will answer for their errors, with broad rights to their defense within the due legal

process.”

Lula’s presidency is unlikely to be like his previous two mandates, coming after the tightest presidential race in more than three decades in Brazil and resistance to his taking office by some of his opponents, political analysts say.

The leftist defeated Bolsonaro in the Oct. 30 vote by less than 2 percentage points. For months, Bolsonaro had sown doubts about the reliability of Brazil’s electronic vote and his loyal supporters were loath to accept the loss.

Many have gathered outside military barracks since, questioning results and pleading with the armed forces to prevent Lula from taking office.

His most die-hard backers resorted to what some authorities and incoming members of Lula’s administration labeled acts of “terrorism” — which had prompted security concerns about inauguration day events.

Ukraine faces grim start to 2023 after fresh Russian attacks

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukrainians faced a grim start to 2023 as Sunday brought more Russian missile and drone attacks following a blistering New Year’s Eve assault that killed at least three civilians across the country, authorities reported.

Air raid sirens sounded in the capital shortly after midnight, followed by a barrage of missiles that interrupted the small celebrations residents held at home due to wartime curfews. Ukrainian officials alleged Moscow was deliberately targeting civilians along with critical infrastructure to create a climate of fear and destroy morale during the long winter months.

In a video address Sunday night, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy praised his citizens’ “sense of unity, of authenticity, of life itself.” The Russians, he said, “will not take away a single year from Ukraine. They will not take away our independence. We will not give them anything.”

Ukrainian forces in the air and on the ground shot down 45 Iranian-made explosive drones fired by Russia on Saturday night and before dawn Sunday, Zelenskyy said.

Another strike at noon Sunday in the southern Zaporizhzhia region killed one person, according to the head of the regional military administration, Alexander Sta-

ruk. But Kyiv was largely quiet, and people there on New Year’s Day savored the snip-pets of peace.

“Of course it was hard to celebrate fully because we understand that our soldiers can’t be with their family,” Evheniya Shulzhenko said while sitting with her husband on a park bench overlooking the city.

But a “really powerful” New Year’s Eve speech by Zelenskyy lifted her spirits and made her proud to be Ukrainian, Shulzhenko said. She recently moved to Kyiv after living in Bakhmut and Kharkiv, two cities that have experienced some of the heaviest fighting of the war.

Overdrive

6 vehicles that make you feel like you're in a spa

By KRISTIN V. SHAW
EDMUNDS

December is one of the most popular months for luxury vehicle sales. Sure, it's great to receive a gift certificate to a spa, but what if you could

have a relaxing experience in your vehicle every time you get in it? With this in mind, the experts at Edmunds have gathered six vehicles with notable spa-like features for a blissful drive.

2023 AUDI A8

Audi's A8 is the flagship luxury model for the German brand, and it boasts limousine-like sumptuousness. The impeccable cabin is equipped with 22-way power-adjustable front seats that are heated and ventilated to help keep you at just the right temperature. A host of extras are also available, including seat massagers

and heated armrests. The rear seats can be equipped to be just as pampering as the fronts. No one will be complaining en route. They might not even want to get out.

Potential zen killer: The A8's ride quality can feel a bit too soft over dips and crests, resulting in wallowy body motions.

Starting price: \$88,895



AUDI AG

This photo provided by Audi shows the 2023 Audi A8, a large luxury sedan available with 22-way adjustable heated and ventilated seats complete with massage.



TOYOTA MOTOR SALES U.S.A. VIA AP

This photo provided by Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. shows the 2023 Lexus LS 500, a large luxury sedan available with quilted leather seating with massage functions for the driver, front passenger and rear outboard passengers.

2023 LEXUS LS 500

The LS 500 treats its passengers to leather upholstery, a sunroof, power rear sunshade, and power-adjustable heated and ventilated front seats. And that's just to start. A large selection of add-on features are available, such as upgraded quilted leather seating with massage functions for the front passengers and rear out-

board passengers. The right rear passenger seat may also recline and even has an optional footrest. Driving or riding in a Japanese luxury sedan doesn't get any more relaxing than this.

Potential zen killer: Avoid that cramped back middle seat, where the experience is less than spa-like.

Starting price: \$77,535



KELLY SERFOSS/HYUNDAI MOTOR AMERICA VIA AP

This photo provided by Hyundai shows the 2023 Genesis G90, a large luxury sedan available with a cabin fragrance diffuser and power-deploying door handles.

2023 GENESIS G90

Right out of the gate on the base model, the 2023 G90 luxury sedan comes standard with power side and rear sunshades to make you feel like a celebrity. Adding to that allure is an excellent Bang & Olufsen sound system to pipe in favorite playlists. Power-adjustable and massaging rear seats are available. The G90 also allows passengers to tai-

lor the cabin lighting, climate control, seat massage and air fragrance to suit different moods. It even has cameras that detect upcoming bumps and preemptively smooth out the ride.

Potential zen killer: A smaller gas tank than the norm means you'll have to emerge from your cozy cocoon to get gas a little more often.

Starting price: \$90,070



STELLANTIS VIA AP

This photo provided by Stellantis shows the 2023 Jeep Grand Wagoneer, a large luxury SUV with three rows of comfortable reclining seats, each with its own screens and padded armchairs.

2023 JEEP GRAND WAGONEER

If a minivan could be luxurious and cool, it would be a Grand Wagoneer. This reborn nameplate includes three rows of comfortable seats with screens and armrests to make each passenger feel like a superstar. Its off-road capability can take you to the most serene natural

environments. The driving position offers a commanding view of the road with excellent visibility. Even the third row, which is often overlooked in many SUVs, gets a reclining function and padded armrests.

Potential zen killer: The ride quality is a bit trucklike, as is the fuel economy.

Starting price: \$89,995



FORD MOTOR CO. VIA AP

This photo provided by Ford Motor Co. shows the 2023 Lincoln Aviator, a three-row luxury midsize SUV available with massaging front seats, rear window sunshades and a 28-speaker audio system.

2023 LINCOLN AVIATOR

For decades, Lincoln has carried a reputation for comfort and status, and the Aviator is no exception. Opt for the Luxury package on this midsize three-row SUV and you'll enjoy 30-way power-adjustable

and massaging front seats. Rear window sunshades and an incredible 28-speaker audio system to play relaxing music are part of the same package. The ambient interior lighting is soft and fully customizable. Lincoln also offers appealing luxury concierge and

service benefits, particularly as part of its Black Label model program.

Potential zen killer: The windshield and rear window are short, which limits visibility and can add stress to the drive.

Starting price: \$54,535



MERCEDES-BENZ USA VIA AP

This photo provided by Mercedes-Benz shows the 2023 Mercedes-Benz EQE, a midsize electric sedan that treats passengers to a relaxing and quiet driving experience.

2023 MERCEDES-BENZ EQE

The EQE is a new electric midsize sedan. As expected from a Mercedes, the front seats cradle passengers in superb comfort. But the EQE further benefits from an exceptionally serene and quiet cabin. Drivers can also activate a special mode

while parked that reclines the driver's seat, closes the vehicle's sunshades, and starts up a cycle of relaxing sounds and cabin lights to help you fall asleep for a nap. It's ideal to use while waiting at an electric charging station for a recharge.

Potential zen killer: Rear headroom in the EQE is a bit

tight, which might distress taller rear passengers.

Starting MSRP: \$75,950

EDMUNDS SAYS:

These vehicles might not feel as good as a day at the spa, but the upscale amenities are the closest you'll find while on the road.

Life & Style

Barbara Walters, news pioneer and 'The View' creator, dies

NEW YORK (AP)—Barbara Walters, the intrepid interviewer, anchor and program host who blazed the way as the first woman to become a TV news superstar during a career remarkable for its duration and variety, has died. She was 93.

ABC broke into its broadcast to announce Walters' death on air Friday night.

"She lived her life with no regrets. She was a trailblazer not only for female journalists, but for all women," her publicist Cindi Berger also said in a statement, adding Walters died peacefully at her New York home.

An ABC spokesperson did not have an immediate comment Friday night beyond sharing a statement from Bob Iger, the CEO of ABC parent The Walt Disney Company.

"Barbara was a true legend, a pioneer not just for women in journalism but for journalism itself," Iger said.

During nearly four decades at ABC, and before that at NBC, Walters' exclusive interviews with rulers, royalty and entertainers brought her celebrity status that ranked with theirs, while placing her at the forefront of the trend that made stars of TV reporters.

Late in her career, she gave infotainment a new twist with "The View," a live ABC weekday kaffee klatsch with an all-female panel for whom any topic was on the table and who welcomed guests ranging from world leaders to teen idols. With that side venture and unexpected hit, Walters



Barbara Walters arrives to participate in a panel discussion featuring the hosts of ABC's "The View," at The Paley Center for Media on April 9, 2008, in New York.

considered "The View" the "dessert" of her career.

A statement from the show said Walters created "The View" in 1997 "to champion women's voices."

"We're proud to be part of her legacy," the statement said.

Walters made headlines in 1976 as the first female network news anchor, with an unprecedented \$1 million salary that drew gasps. Her drive was legendary as she competed—not just with rival networks, but with colleagues at her own network—for each big "get" in a world jammed with more and more interviewers, including female journalists following in her trail.

"I never expected this!" Walters said in 2004, taking stock of her success. "I always thought I'd be a writer for tele-

vision. I never even thought I'd be in front of a camera."

But she was a natural on camera, especially when plying notables with searing questions.

"I'm not afraid when I'm interviewing, I have no fear!" Walters told The Associated Press in 2008.

In a voice that never lost its trace of her native Boston accent or its substitution of Ws-for-Rs, Walters lobbed blunt and sometimes giddy questions, often sugarcoated with a hushed, reverential delivery.

"Offscreen, do you like you?" she once asked actor John Wayne, while Lady Bird Johnson was asked whether she was jealous of her late husband's reputation as a ladies' man.

In May 2014, she taped her

final episode of "The View" amid much ceremony to end a five-decade career in television (although she continued to make occasional TV appearances). During a commercial break, a throng of TV newswomen she had paved the way for—including Diane Sawyer, Katie Couric, Robin Roberts and Connie Chung—posed for a group portrait.

"I have to remember this on the bad days," Walters said quietly, "because this is the best."

Her career began with no such inklings of majesty.

Walters graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1943

and eventually landed a "temporary," behind-the-scenes assignment at "Today" in 1961. Shortly afterward, what was seen as the token woman's slot among the staff's eight writers opened. Walters got the job and began to make occasional on-air appearances with off-beat stories such as "A Day in the Life of a Nun" or the tribulations of a Playboy bunny. For the latter, she donned bunny ears and high heels to work at the Playboy Club.

As she appeared more frequently, she was spared the title of "'Today' Girl" that had been attached to her predecessors. But she had to pay

her dues, sometimes sprinting between interviews to do dog food commercials.

She had the first interview with Rose Kennedy after the assassination of her son, Robert, as well as with Princess Grace of Monaco and President Richard Nixon. She traveled to India with Jacqueline Kennedy, to China with Nixon and to Iran to cover the shah's gala party. But she faced a setback in 1971 with the arrival of a new host, Frank McGee, who insisted she wait for him to ask three questions before she could open her mouth during interviews with "powerful persons."

Full speed ahead: 'Avatar' sequel again dominates box office

NEW YORK (AP)—"Avatar: The Way of Water" is the box office king for a third straight week, and shows no sign of slowing down.

James Cameron's long-awaited sequel to the first "Avatar" film brought in an estimated \$63 million over the holiday weekend, roughly the same as the previous week, and now has made more than \$400 million domestically and more than \$1.3 billion globally. "The Way of Water" is

already the 15th highest global release ever, just behind the first "Black Panther."

Numbers released Sunday by Comscore showed "Avatar" far ahead of the runner-up, Universal's "Shrek" spinoff "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish," which made an estimated \$16 million, and Disney's "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," which brought in around \$4.8 million.

The Sony biopic "Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance

With Somebody" made \$4.2 million in its second week of release. "Babylon," the epic of early Hollywood starring Brad Pitt and Margot Robbie, continued to fare badly despite its five Golden Globe nominations. The Paramount release earned just \$2.7 million in its second week, a 24% drop, and averaged just \$815 per location. By comparison, the new "Avatar," a 20th Century Studios film, averaged more than \$15,000.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

- | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. "Avatar: The Way of Water," \$63 million. | 4. "I Wanna Dance With Somebody," \$4.2 million. | 8. "The Fabelmans," \$1.1 million. |
| 2. "Puss in Boots: The Last Wish," \$16 million. | 5. "Babylon," \$2.7 million. | 9. "The Menu," \$1.1 million. |
| 3. "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," \$4.8 million. | 6. "Violent Night," \$2.1 million. | 10. "Strange World," \$538,000. |
| | 7. "The Whale," \$1.3 million. | |

Wife's online relationships blossom as marriage withers

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for 37 years to an alcoholic. He is not verbally or physically abusive.

I have been online talking to three men. I think one of them is obsessed with me, and they all say they love me. I know this isn't going anywhere, but why am I doing this? I don't know these men at all. I don't see them in person. Two are supposedly on a ship; the other is in the Army. They don't know where I live. I have told them I'm older than they are; I'm 66. (They are 37, 47 and 57.)

I know a person can feel alone in a marriage. That's how I felt for years. Now I just feel like we're roommates. I'd appreciate any insight you might have about why I'm doing this.

LIVING A SOAP OPERA

DEAR LIVING: I suspect you engage in these online relationships because you are lonely and seeking validation that you aren't receiving from your husband. It is also probably exciting to feel you are attractive to men after living with someone who is uninterested and unresponsive for so many years. It's sad that you have had to resort to emotional affairs to supply what is missing in your marriage.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My brother has a debilitating illness that landed him in the hospital. While he was there, he had a birth-

day. I called him to say "Happy Birthday," but kept it short because he sounded weak. The next day, I received a scathing text from my sister, fuming that my phone call wasn't long enough. Her text concluded with, "Just remember, you are healthy and he is sick!"

I was crushed at her words, but also confused because she didn't bother to tell me he was hospitalized until 10 days had passed. This kind of thing has gone on for years. I was the one who took care of our elderly parents when my siblings couldn't be bothered. They didn't even take the time to check in on my husband after he lost his sister unexpectedly.

What I am grappling with i

DEEPLY WOUNDED IN WEST VIRGINIA

DEAR DEEPLY WOUNDED: This appears to be another example of the adage "no good deed goes unpunished." Your question can be answered by simply sitting down and listing the pros and cons of continuing a relationship with your sister. If the "cons" outnumber the "pros," you will know what to do.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am dating a widow. Her husband passed three years ago, but she still carries a lot of feelings for him. This weekend would have been their wedding anniversary. She has been very moody all this week. Should I give her space this weekend to deal with her emotions by herself? Or should I try to be there for her? I do not want to disrespect

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



her or her husband's memory.

UNCERTAIN IN TEXAS

DEAR UNCERTAIN: Talk to her. Tell your lady friend you can see that she's not herself. Ask if there is anything you can do to help her, and then listen. If you do, she will tell you what she needs from you, whether it's some space or a willing ear to vent her feelings.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

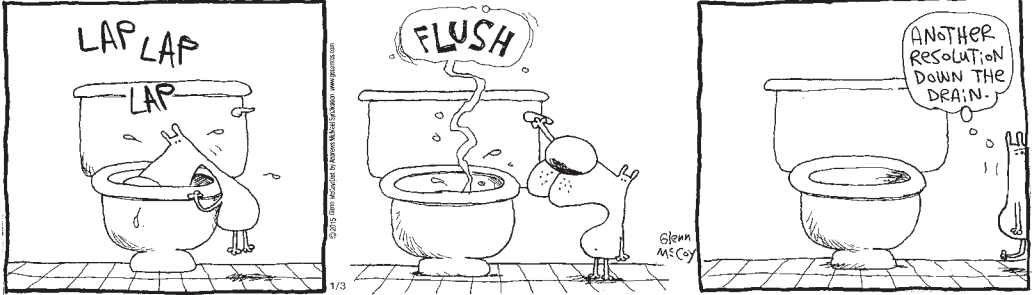
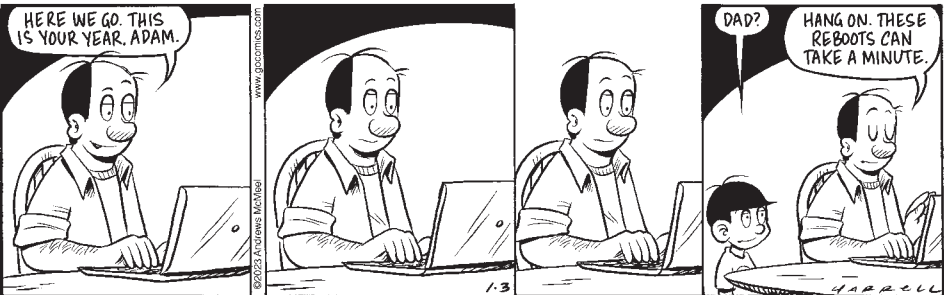


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

CROSSWORD ACROSS 1 Cardinal cap letters 4 The "A" of UAE 8 Not that 12 Debtor's letters 13 Bonkers 14 Apiece 15 Secret-protecting doc. 16 Com-muter zone, perhaps 18 Dutch cheese 20 Swiss peak 21 Okla-homa city 24 Indulges, with "on" 28 Vague situation 32 Band-leader Puente 33 Brink 34 Toyota model 36 Takeoff stat 37 Detail 39 Restricted zone 41 Craze 43 Subject, usually

44 "Pyg-malion" mono-gram 46 Luxury watch brand 50 Close by 55 Blunder 56 Expan-sive 57 IRS agent 58 Aunt, in Acapulco 59 Online auction site 60 Comfy-cozy 61 Blue hue

3 Hawaiian feast 4 Fact book 5 Shad product 6 Do some-thing 7 Tora —, Afghani- stan 8 Oolong brewer 9 Guffaw syllable 10 "Rocks" 11 — Na Na 17 Vintage 19 Susan of "L.A. Law" 22 Persia, today 23 Fiend 25 Wedding cake layer

26 Diminu- tive suffix 27 Pop 28 Bleak 29 Actress Moreno 30 "So be it" 31 Golden Fleece ship 35 Lurch's line on "The Addams Family" 38 Powerful year 40 Yucatan 42 Actor Vigoda 45 Pre-college exams 47 Allows 48 Actor Estrada 49 Picture of health? 50 "— had it!" 51 Apprehend 52 Airport screening org. 53 LBJ's succes-sor 54 Perfume label word

Solution time: 26 mins.

Last Friday's Answer 01/03

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eli Manning, 42; Danica McKellar, 48; Mel Gibson, 67; Victoria Principal, 73.

Happy Birthday: Go out of your way to be helpful this year, and opportunities will come your way. A positive attitude will lead to social invitations that will encourage meaningful relationships with people who share your concerns, enthusiasm and hobbies. Expand your interests to focus on health and fitness, and prioritize looking and feeling your best. Romance is in the stars. Your numbers are 4, 12, 22, 24, 31, 44, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): By participating, you'll make a connection that offers a unique approach to something you want to pursue. Put more effort into presenting who you are, what you can do and what you expect. Take control instead of being controlled. ****

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Take a moment to clarify what you want and the approach you plan to take to reach your objective. Verify information and make the necessary changes as you progress. Dress for the part if you want to make a good impression. Make things happen. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): A tight schedule will help you avoid trouble while accomplishing your goal. Listen attentively, or you'll misinterpret what's said. Hard work will pay off and lead to rewards. Choose to demonstrate what you can do instead of just talking about yourself. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Simplify how you do things and free up enough time to relax with someone you want to get to know better. Sharing ideas will change your

plans and the outcome of a work-related situation. Don't let tardiness or overindulgence be your downfall. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Check in with people who share your likes and dislikes. The conversations you have will encourage you to participate in something that promotes networking and picking up additional skills. An energetic, hands-on approach will invite compliments and exciting offers. ****

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't get angry; get moving. Look at your options and choose to do something that sparks your interest or can change your outlook regarding prospects and possibilities. Flaunt what you have to offer, and you'll raise interest and increase your options. **

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Refuse to lose sight of your objective. Don't bend the rules to suit someone else's needs. Put your physical effort into personal gain, good health and protecting yourself from being taken for granted. Physical activity will boost your ego. Romance is favored. *****

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Consider what will make the most significant difference in your life and concentrate on heading down that path. Refuse to let others limit what you can accomplish. Speak up and present the changes you plan to make. Make health and finances your priorities. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your enthusiasm will encourage others to accommodate you. Paint a vivid picture, and doors will open. Self-improvement will boost your chance to make a statement and seal a deal. Don't underestimate the power of persuasion. Base change on your needs, not your desires. ***

EUGENIA LAST THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Pay attention to detail and make personal changes that add to your convenience and ease stress. Plan a trip or sign up for an event that helps you comprehend what's possible and how it can improve your life. Don't settle for less. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Dress up, implement plans with someone you enjoy spending time with and ask questions that will clear up any misunderstanding or uncertainty you face. A chance to do something nice for someone you love will have a positive impact on your relationship. *****

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Self-improvement projects will pay off. Someone will scrutinize how you take care of your physical and emotional well-being. Do what you can, but don't let what others say deter you from following your heart and doing what's best for you. Romance is favored. **

Birthday Baby: You are playful, energetic and astute. You are original and intelligent.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

9		3				6			
				7					
1				3	8				4
	9		8		1	5			
		8				4			
		6	3		2		7		
2			9	5					8
					6				
		7				3		1	

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/03 ©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

3	4	7	8	6	5	9	2	1
9	8	1	7	3	2	5	6	4
5	2	6	9	1	4	3	7	8
8	5	9	1	2	7	6	4	3
4	6	2	3	5	8	7	1	9
7	1	3	6	4	9	8	5	2
1	3	4	5	9	6	2	8	7
2	7	5	4	8	3	1	9	6
6	9	8	2	7	1	4	3	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 12/78

WONDERWORD® By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

PUNCHING BAGS Solution: 12 letters

F T R A I N O I T C A E R W M
R E C O A C H T O L C O O A U
T I K E S T R E L A H R R S
C N T C R I N G P C K T C M C
A F H K I C K R N O I O S U L
P L G T A H B A U A U H A P E
M A I Z E L T L N A N D P S
I T E N O H A T T N E Y D O S
A H C L N R E G L O V E S P
N B K E A T R I G L L A B T E
I L T N S R N N I D S E F U E
A E A P E G A N K O O H O R D
H B O W I E K R N H T L A E H
C R O S S S S P M A H C M P G
T P H T G N E R T S T R I K E

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Ages, Cake, Candles, Celebrations, Champagne, Cheering, Clock, Concerts, Confetti, Countdown, Dinner, Disco Ball, Drink, Entertainment, Flute, Food, Garland, Goals, Gold, Gown, Hats, Horns, Host, Invitations, Kids, Lanterns, Love, Piñata, Pledge, Resolution, Restaurants, Show, Sing, Skiing, Snacks, Stage, Start, Success, Suit, Toast, Vacation

Last Friday's Answer: Cantonese
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Brady leads Bucs' rally past Panthers for NFC South title

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Tom Brady threw for 432 yards and three long touchdowns to Mike Evans, helping the Tampa Bay Buccaneers clinch their second straight NFC South championship with a 30-24 come-from-behind win over the Carolina Panthers on Sunday.

Evans finished with 10 catches for 207 yards, scoring on receptions of 63, 57, and 30 yards and becoming the first player in NFL history to begin a career with nine consecutive seasons with 1,000-plus yards receiving.

The Panthers (6-10) led 14-0 early and 21-10 after Sam Darnold's third TD pass of the day, 10 seconds into the fourth quarter.

It was all Bucs from there, with Evans beating cornerback C.J. Henderson for touchdowns twice and Darnold losing a fumble on a sack inside his own 10. That turnover set up Brady's 1-yard TD sneak, which put the game out of reach with 1:58 left.

The Bucs (8-8) can finish the regular season with a winning record by beating Atlanta on the road next weekend. As division champs, they are assured of beginning the playoffs with a home game in two weeks.

Packers 41, Vikings 17

In Green Bay, Wis., Aaron Rodgers threw a touchdown pass and ran for a score, and Green Bay continued its improbable playoff push by shutting down Justin Jefferson and Minnesota.

Keisean Nixon scored on a 105-yard kickoff return and Darnell Savage had a 75-yard pick-6 of Kirk Cousins — one of four turnovers by the Vikings QB — to help Green Bay build a 27-3 halftime lead. Aaron Jones rushed for 111 yards on 14 carries and A.J. Dillon had a 2-yard touchdown run as the Packers won their fourth straight.

Green Bay (8-8) will reach the playoffs if it beats division rival Detroit at home in its regular-season finale. A fourth straight postseason berth seemed out of the question after a 1-7 stretch dropped the Packers to 4-8, but they haven't lost since and have benefited from favorable results around the league.

Rodgers went 15 of 24 for 159 yards and the Packers' defense made life miserable for Cousins and Jefferson, the NFL's leading receiver who was held to one catch for 15 yards.

Steelers 16, Ravens 13

In Baltimore, Kenny Pickett threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Najee Harris with 56 seconds remaining to



Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady passes during the first half of an NFL football game between the Carolina Panthers and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023, in Tampa, Fla. AP

give Pittsburgh the win over Baltimore.

It was the first touchdown allowed by Baltimore at home in four games, and the Steelers (8-8) needed it to avoid elimination from the playoffs. Pittsburgh can now make the postseason by beating Cleveland next weekend — if Miami and New England both lose. And Steelers coach Mike Tomlin can still avoid his first losing record in 16 seasons.

Down 13-9, Pickett drove the Steelers 80 yards in 3:20 against their rivals with the season on the line. On third-and-8 from the 10, the rookie scrambled away from pressure and threw a perfect pass to Harris, who had slipped behind linebacker Roquan Smith along the left sideline.

Giants 38, Colts 10

In East Rutherford, N.J., Daniel Jones threw two touchdown passes and ran for two more, and New York routed Indianapolis to make the playoffs for the first time since 2016.

Landon Collins, one of two players from the '16 team, broke the game open late in the second quarter with a 52-yard pick-6 as the Giants (9-6-1) put a final stamp on a surprising playoff run under first-year coach Brian Daboll.

The Colts (4-11-1) lost their sixth straight and ninth in 10 games.

New York's point total was a season high and its first time scoring 30 or more since a 37-34 loss to Dallas on Oct. 11, 2020.

Jones threw touchdown passes of 6 yards to Richie James and 6 yards to Isaiah Hodgins in the first half and scored on runs of 18 and 10 yards in the second half. He finished 19 of 24 for 177 yards

and had 11 rushes for 91 yards.

Seahawks 23, Jets 6

In Seattle, Geno Smith threw two first-half touchdown passes, Kenneth Walker III rushed for 133 yards and Seattle remained in playoff contention while ending New York's postseason chances.

Seattle (8-8) snapped a three-game losing streak and ensured its Week 18 matchup against the Los Angeles Rams will be meaningful. The Seahawks must win and hope for a loss or tie by Green Bay against Detroit to reach the postseason.

New York's playoff hopes ended with a thud after its fifth straight loss and extended the longest active playoff drought in the NFL to a franchise-record 12 seasons. The Jets (7-9) last reached the postseason in 2011 and will finish with a losing record for the seventh straight year.

Smith finished 18 of 29 for 183 yards and added the Jets to the list of victories against former employers that already included wins over the Chargers and Giants.

Patriots 23, Dolphins 21

In Foxborough, Mass., Kyle Dugger intercepted Teddy Bridgewater and returned it 39 yards for a go-ahead touchdown late in the third quarter, and New England rallied to beat skidding Miami and stay in playoff contention.

Mac Jones had touchdown passes to Tyquan Thornton and Jakobi Meyers to help the Patriots (8-8) snap a four-game losing streak to their AFC East rivals. Jones finished 20 of 33 for 203 yards, and his 1-yard pass to Meyers put New England ahead 23-14

late in the fourth quarter.

The Dolphins (8-8) entered with a chance to clinch a postseason berth. Instead, Miami lost its fifth straight game and will need to win next week against the Jets and have Buffalo beat New England to qualify for the postseason for the first time since 2016.

Saints 20, Eagles 10

In Philadelphia, Marshon Lattimore returned an interception 11 yards for a late touchdown, and New Orleans put a serious dent in Philadelphia's bid for the top seed in the NFC.

Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts missed a second straight game with a sprained right shoulder. Philadelphia (13-3) now needs to beat the New York Giants next weekend to secure the conference's top seed. A loss would give Dallas a shot at the division crown.

The Saints (7-9) won their third straight game but were later eliminated from playoff contention when Green Bay beat Minnesota. Taysom Hill had a 1-yard TD run in New Orleans' surprising first half.

49ers 37, Raiders 34, OT

In Las Vegas, Tashaun Gipson intercepted Jarrett Stidham in overtime and returned it 56 yards to set up Robbie Gould's 23-yard field goal, and San Francisco beat Las Vegas to extend its winning streak to nine games.

The 49ers (12-4) can clinch the No. 2 seed in the NFC with a win against Arizona next week or a loss by Minnesota. San Francisco also has a shot at the No. 1 seed and a bye if Philadelphia loses to the Giants in Week 18.

San Francisco allowed its

most points since its most recent loss — 44-23 to Kansas City on Oct. 23.

Christian McCaffrey rushed for 121 yards and caught six passes for 72 yards. He surpassed 1,000 yards rushing for the third season and has scored touchdowns in five consecutive games.

The Raiders (6-10) have lost three of four and were eliminated from playoff contention.

Lions 41, Bears 10

In Detroit, Jared Goff threw three touchdown passes, including two in the first half to Brock Wright, and Detroit beat Chicago to remain in the playoff chase.

The Lions (8-8) have won seven of nine to give themselves a shot at earning a postseason spot for the first time since 2016 going into their regular-season finale at Green Bay. Detroit needs a win and a loss by Seattle to the Los Angeles Rams.

The Justin Fields-led Bears (3-13) took two leads in the opening quarter before collapsing and losing a franchise-record ninth straight game.

Goff completed passes to 10 receivers, went 21 of 29 for 255 yards and did not throw an interception for an eighth consecutive game. Jamaal Williams had a career-high 144 yards rushing on 22 carries — including his 15th rushing TD this season — and D'Andre Swift added 117 yards from scrimmage and two scores.

Chiefs 27, Broncos 24

In Kansas City, Mo., Patrick Mahomes threw for 328 yards and three touchdowns, two of them to Jerick McKinnon, and Kansas City overcame another sloppy start to hold off Denver.

Isiah Pacheco and Blake Bell also scored for the Chiefs (13-3), who overcame a 17-13 third-quarter deficit to beat the Broncos for the 15th consecutive time while keeping alive their hopes for the AFC's No. 1 seed and lone postseason bye.

The Chiefs began the day tied with the Bills, who play Cincinnati on Monday night, for the conference's best record.

Jaguars 31, Texans 3

In Houston, Travis Etienne ran for 108 yards and a touchdown before halftime, Tyson Campbell returned a fumble for a score and Jacksonville won its fourth straight while snapping a nine-game skid against Houston.

The AFC South-leading Jaguars (8-8) need to beat slumping Tennessee at home next weekend to win the division for the first time since 2017.

Trevor Lawrence threw for 152 yards, but played just one

possession in the second half, and Etienne didn't carry the ball after halftime with the Jaguars up 28-3 on the way to their first win over the Texans since 2017.

Commanders 24, Browns 10

In Landover, Md., Carson Wentz threw three interceptions after getting the starting quarterback job back, defensive miscues added up and Washington lost to Cleveland.

The Commanders (7-8-1) were later eliminated from playoff contention when Green Bay beat Minnesota.

Wentz was 16 of 28 for 143 yards, and the offense gained just 261 yards — 96 on Washington's only touchdown drive. Fans booed and chanted early on for Taylor Heinicke multiple times after Wentz missed open receivers or lobbed the ball into the hands of a Cleveland defender.

But Wentz remained in the game and struggled to move the ball beyond handing it to rookie running back Brian Robinson Jr., who rushed for 87 yards on 24 carries. The Commanders' fourth-ranked defense allowed a handful of big plays, including a 46-yard pass from Deshaun Watson to Amari Cooper that became a touchdown when top cornerback Kendall Fuller missed an open-field tackle.

Chargers 31, Rams 10

In Inglewood, Calif., Austin Ekeler rushed for 122 yards, scored two touchdowns and became the fifth running back with 100 receptions in a season as the Chargers won the matchup of Los Angeles teams.

Ekeler, who has an NFL-leading 18 touchdowns (13 rushing, five receiving), also had a career-best 72-yard TD run midway through the second quarter to extend the Chargers' lead to 14-3.

It was the third 100-yard rushing game in Ekeler's six-year career and his second this season.

Falcons 20, Cardinals 19

In Atlanta, Younghoe Koo made a 21-yard field goal on the final play and Atlanta beat Arizona to end a four-game skid.

In a matchup of teams eliminated from playoff contention, Atlanta rookie quarterback Desmond Ridder got his first career victory. He was 19 of 26 for 169 yards and no interceptions in his third start as he auditions for a starting job next season.

The Falcons (6-10) improved to 5-8 in one-possession games. They were 7-2 in such games last season.

Jokic has triple-double, Nuggets top Celtics after rim delay



Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, left, looks to pass the ball as Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown, front right, and center Al Horford defend in the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023, in Denver.

DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic had 30 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists, and the hot-shooting Denver Nuggets beat the Boston Celtics 123-111 on Sunday night in a matchup of NBA conference leaders that was delayed about 35 minutes because a powerful dunk bent one of the rims.

Jokic hit 10 of 13 shots from the field and all eight free throws in his second straight triple-double and ninth of the season. Bruce Brown added 21 points for the Nuggets, who shot 57% from the floor and made 17 of 30 3-pointers.

"He's my MVP. He should be the league's MVP three times in a row," Brown said of Jokic. "He's doing everything for us. Without Jok, I don't know where we'd be."

Denver won for the 10th time in 12 games, snapped a six-game skid against Boston

and opened a one-game lead in the Western Conference.

The Nuggets led by as many as 18 and waited out a long delay with 6:43 left as a crew struggled to re-level the rim after a dunk by Boston's Robert Williams III.

"I didn't know I did it until my teammates started blaming me," Williams said. "I've never done that before."

It took six workers, two ladders, a level, phone calls and eventually a crew member taking the rim off the backboard before it was fixed.

"There was no communication. They spent all that time trying to fix it but when we came back it still looked like it wasn't even level, in my opinion. So we just wasted all that time," Celtics guard Jaylen Brown said.

"That has an effect on the game. That's how injuries and stuff happen. Luckily

that didn't (happen), but that wasn't good. That whole process was handled poorly, in my opinion, and that had an effect as well. But luckily nobody got hurt."

Players were allowed a brief warmup before play resumed, and then the Nuggets pulled away.

"Man, that was crazy," Denver guard Bones Hyland said of the delay. "I've never been in a game with that before. We just tried to stay loose and finish the game out."

Jaylen Brown scored 30 points and Jayson Tatum shook off a slow start to add 25 for Boston, which shot just 9 of 33 from 3-point range in the opener of a four-game trip. The loss snapped a four-game winning streak for the Celtics, whose lead in the East was sliced to 1 1/2 games.

Bruce Brown started in place of Jamal Murray (sore

knee) and went 4 of 6 on 3s. It was a familiar theme for the Nuggets, who entered as the NBA's top 3-point shooting team. They are 34 of 58 from long distance over the past two games.

This one was billed as a matchup of top NBA MVP contenders Jokic and Tatum. And the crowd took notice.

A large number of Celtics fans started chanting "MVP! MVP!" when Tatum went to the foul line late in the second quarter. Nuggets fans loudly returned the favor moments later with their own MVP chant for Jokic when he went to the line.

In the end, Jokic showed it'll be tough to wrestle the trophy from him.

Grizzlies 118, Kings 108

In Memphis, Tenn., Ja Morant scored 35 points, Tyus Jones added 18 and Memphis broke open a close game

in the fourth quarter to beat Sacramento.

Dillon Brooks had 15 points and Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with 14 as the Grizzlies won their third straight game. Morant added eight rebounds and five assists. Jones had eight assists and Steven Adams tied his career high with 23 rebounds.

De'Aaron Fox led the Kings with 19 points, and Malik Monk scored 18 off the bench. Domantas Sabonis had 18 points and 14 rebounds.

Wizards 118, Bucks 95

In Milwaukee, Rui Hachimura had 26 points, Kristaps Porzingis scored 22 and Washington defeated short-

handed Milwaukee for its season-best fifth consecutive victory.

The scuffling Bucks played without Giannis Antetokounmpo, who sat out due to left knee soreness. Milwaukee has dropped five of six.

Jrue Holiday also missed the game with an illness, and Khris Middleton sat out for the eighth consecutive game due to right knee soreness.

Daniel Gafford had 17 points for the Wizards (17-21), who played without leading scorer Bradley Beal. He is dealing with left hamstring soreness.

Bobby Portis led Milwaukee with 19 points and 10 rebounds.

NBA BRIEFS

NBA suspends 11 players from Magic-Pistons scuffle

NEW YORK (AP)—Detroit guard Killian Hayes and Orlando's Moritz Wagner were each given multi-game suspensions for their roles in a scuffle, while the NBA suspended eight Magic players one game apiece Thursday for leaving the bench area during an altercation.

Hayes, who struck Wagner in the back of the head, was given a three-game suspension without pay. Wagner was banned two games and the Pistons' Hamidou Diallo was suspended one game by NBA executive vice president Joe Dumars—the former Pistons star player and executive.

The fallout from the game in Detroit on Wednesday night was so large that the suspensions of the Magic players will be staggered so they have enough available players to play their next game.

Cole Anthony, R.J. Hampton, Gary Harris, Kevon Harris, Admiral Schofield, Franz Wagner, Mo Bamba and Wendell Carter Jr. were all suspended one game.

Wagner hip-checked Hayes into the Detroit bench to begin the altercation. Hayes got up and hit him in the back, and Wagner appeared to briefly be knocked out. Magic players then rushed off their bench area in concern for their teammate.

Anthony, Bamba, Carter Hampton and Gary Harris will serve their suspensions Friday against Washington. Kevon Harris, Schofield and Franz Wagner will be suspended for Orlando's following game Jan. 4 in Oklahoma City.

The 11 suspensions will result in just over \$500,000 in forfeited salary. Hayes

will lose the most, about \$121,000.

Teen prodigy Wembanyama MVP in French league's All-Star game

PARIS (AP)—French teen prodigy Victor Wembanyama embellished his fast-growing reputation when he became the youngest MVP in the French league's All-Star game.

The 18-year-old Wembanyama finished with 27 points, 12 rebounds and four assists on Thursday night as the All-Star France team won 136-128 against the All-Star World team—an annual contest between French and non-French players in the French league's LNB.

The 7-foot-3 Wembanyama is considered the likely top pick in the 2023 NBA draft next June and is a near-certainty to be the first top-five draft pick from France.

In the two months since his jaw-dropping performances in two exhibition games in Las Vegas, "Wembamania" has swept France with sold-out games whenever he plays for Paris-based Metropolitans 92.

Wembanyama is leading the French league with averages of 22.9 points and 9.6 rebounds per game. And those are his final numbers as an 18-year-old. He turns 19 on Jan. 4, 2023.

He hit a purple patch from early November to early December with a streak of four consecutive 30-or-more-point games.

Wembanyama's international career got off to a good start and he is 2-0 with Olympic silver medalist France, with 39 points scored and 13 rebounds in those two games.

France plays Lithuania and the Czech Republic in February.

Hawks' McMillan says he has no plans to retire midseason

ATLANTA (AP)—Hawks coach Nate McMillan said Friday he has no plans to retire in the middle of the season, brushing back a report citing unnamed sources.

The Athletic reported that McMillan is considering stepping down before the season ends, but McMillan said that's not true.

"We have a race to prepare for," McMillan said. "We're trying to get our guys healthy and make a run another run at the playoffs, but the things that were reported, look, I'm here to coach this year, and I've talked to (owner) Tony Ressler many times, and our goal is to make the playoffs. And that's

what I'm working towards."

McMillan, 58, said he had no immediate reaction to the report. He is in the middle of his third season with the Hawks, who are 17-18 and in ninth place in the Eastern Conference.

"I read that article briefly," he said. "I've never spoke to that reporter before. I think the last two weeks he's written a couple of articles with some sources in our organization that are making some comments about me and some things that I'm saying and doing."

"Look, at the end of the year, I'll do as I've always done. I'll talk with my family

and see if that flame, that fire, to continue next season, but that's the end of the season. All of us think about retiring, but that's at the end of the season. We're going to move past that, that story."

McMillan took over as coach when Lloyd Pierce was fired during the 2020-21 season and led the Hawks to the Eastern Conference finals. He was signed to a four-year contract after the season.

McMillan has a 748-656 record in five seasons with Seattle, seven with Portland, four with Indiana and parts of three with Atlanta. He was upset that a disagreement with Hawks star guard Trae Young

during a shootaround became public on Dec. 2. Young was injured but skipped the game that night, leading to speculation that McMillan and Young are at odds.

It's been a busy season in the front office, with Travis Schlenk stepping down last week from his position as president of basketball operations to work as an adviser. General manager Landry Fields has assumed control of daily operations. Fields was promoted to GM earlier this year.

McMillan spent his entire 12-year playing career with Seattle, ending in 1997-98, and averaged 5.9 points and 6.1 assists.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Dr. Ron Snyder, Dr. Galvin Guerrero, and Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. during the awards ceremony of the '22 Mile Race last Saturday at the parking lot of Tapped Out in Garapan.

MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dr. Galvin Guerrero and Dr. Ron Snyder are proof that the academe can breed the most disciplined of runners.

Not only have these two fine gentlemen lead their respective institutions of learning, they've also found time in their busy schedules to complete a running streak or in Snyder's case a two-year streak.

Guerrero, who completed his streak last Dec. 31 during Run Saipan's Run from '22 Mile Race, is deeply honored

to join the ranks of pioneers like Edward Dela Cruz Jr., Snyder, and streak runners from around the world.

"This process has helped me become healthier by losing some weight, lowering my blood pressure, and improving my running performance. I can now run a mile under 7 minutes, which is quite an accomplishment for me as I turn 50 in 2023," said the Northern Marianas College president.

He admits that completing the streak wasn't a bed of roses though.

"I have to admit, it was

tough at times, especially when I traveled and had to run in airports or the frigid cold to ensure I wouldn't miss a day."

He said the most memorable run during the streak was last February in Washington, D.C.

"Temperatures dipped toward freezing! But it's all been worth it, especially for my family as I do my best to stay healthy for them. My grandmother just turned 92, and I hope to live just as long as she has. Plus, as a college president, it was important for me to lead by example

on my health journey. I hope that my example inspires others to do something that improves their health on a regular basis, whether it be

by eating right, exercising more routinely, or running every day."

Snyder, meanwhile, quoted Steve Prefontaine when asked about his thoughts in completing his second year of streaking.

"You cannot propel yourself forward by patting yourself on the back," he wrote quoting the American long-distance running legend.

The Saipan International School headmaster said he won't be stopping his streak soon as he's not content with his 730 days of running at least a mile a day.

"While I am happy to have finished my second year, I am already looking forward to my next big milestone—1,000 days and my comma."

Snyder said that will happen on her sister's birthday next year and is dedicating his comma to her daughter, Jessika, to raise funds for the Prader Wili Alliance of NY.

PWANY is an organization dedicated to assisting people with her rare condition and those who would like to donate funds to Jessika to click on <https://www.gofundme.com/f/runforpwanyin2023>.

"One mile is the minimum goal but I actually set my goal to 2 kilometers this year. My most memorable run in 2022 was probably running with my daughter on her 200th day. She was in North Carolina, I was here and we called

each other on WhatsApp and ran together."

Snyder, who made it two years of streak running last Dec. 30, came clean that he came close to quitting his quest for a second year.

"For me, two years isn't the same degree of difficulty as one year was. Now, running is part of my daily life. But I have to admit, toward the end of the second year I was moving houses, finishing up the semester at school, doing

extra work after we lost one of our admin team, the seniors were all clamoring to finish the university applications and we were in

the midst of putting together the Run Saipan Half Marathon. There were days when I was just tired and it was tough to stay motivated."

Fortunately for Snyder, Saipan streak pioneer and Run Saipan president Dela Cruz was there to be a source of inspiration.

"I am happy to say that I have also inspired others to start their own streak. My advice to anyone else wanting to start a streak, join a running club, follow International Streak Runners on Facebook, get someone in your corner and start. Know that it won't always be easy. There will be days when you are tired or sick or just down. It is those days when it pays to have someone who will ask the question, 'Have you run yet today?'" he said.

KETOLA

From Page 20

back, she's just been spending time with family, but that "It's good to have a PR."

With this race, she said "it's a tougher challenge for me because I'm more of a distance runner, so this is like a really small portion of what I usually run, but then it's also good to work on speed once in a while."

Edward Dela Cruz Jr., Run Saipan president who also ran the race, said that "It was a great race. We promised people a fast course with optimal settings to run into the new year strong and our race results speak for themselves. I couldn't be more proud of all our runners this year. Everyone was happy and started the day with a high note and positive vibes to usher in the New Year. Thank

you to our runners and our hard working volunteers of Northern Marianas Athletics and Run Saipan. Thank you to DTE Endurance, OneTime Sports, MHS Dolphin Running Club, and especially the Department of Public Safety. We wish everyone a happy and prosperous new year."

Results of the other age categories will come out in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

JINGLE

From Page 20

those moments, with a sniper shot from Simon almost hitting the head of Omar. It was immediately replied with an equally deadly spike from the hand of Kumuch that led to a point—putting the Boyz in the lead and eventually winning the second set after they landed a couple more tricky placement shots.

In the deciding tie-breaker third set, a series of untouchable spikes from the duo of Pang and Kumuch, along with blocking off the attack of spikes from a fatiguing Simon and company, Jingle Boyz built an 8-5 lead. It was smooth sailing from there as the Boyz sealed the win when the Kings were unable

to catch up from a 9-point deficit toward the end, handing the championship trophy to Jingle Boyz.

The road to victory by the Boyz came after they led Pool A with a 10-1 record.

In the quarterfinals last Tuesday, the Boyz kicked out the Asian Airlines and in the semifinals on Thursday, discarded the Naughty List. The Kings, however, came into the finals as the underdogs when they handed an upset to Pool B top team Paramapapums in the semifinals.

Omar, on their come-from-behind win in the finals, said "we noticed that in the first set, we didn't communicate at all. We weren't having fun. That's our motto: have fun above everything. So in the second set, we still weren't communicating as well, but luckily, we

put it together, started cheering each other on, and started calling blocks, digs, and what place to set and cover."

He attributed their success to teamwork and positive vibes because. "We were really in our heads already at that moment... We were able to advance to the third set which gave us the momentum and the spirit to really finish strong. We were 10-1 all season and we wanted to take the big W but most of all have fun."

Omar said that most of the players are veteran players and they wanted to incorporate the young players to share with them some knowledge of the game.

Results of the women's division champions will be posted in the next editions of *Saipan Tribune*.

IZUKA

From Page 20

help support the athlete's body and help move more weights.

"I am strongest at deadlifting, while I would like to work more on my bench press," said Izuka, who admitted facing challenges with bench press when he first started in powerlifting. Bench press is done with the trainee pressing a weight upwards while lying on a weight training bench.

"I have long arms so it's quite challenging. My long arms served me and my soccer team well when I was at the pitch, but when I am there at the training bench, I really have to make adjustments to have a good performance,"

Izuka said.

The Marianas High School graduate, however, added that the hard work, discipline and commitment he learned from playing soccer, has helped him transition to powerlifting easily and achieved good numbers.

"In soccer, we train regularly and that's the same thing I do with powerlifting. I train six times a week for about two hours every training day. I do it either after school or during long school breaks at the school gym," Izuka said.

The former NMI goalkeeper who finished in the Top 3 in a tournament held on Saipan in August last year, will head back to Mich-

igan this Wednesday and will hit the gym soon to resume his training and prepare for competitions. He is planning to join tournaments in Michigan and hopefully return to the NMI in the fall for a chance to compete in the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands.

"I've never thought of going into powerlifting, but now I am very much into it and I like how the mental aspect of the sport has helped me in my studies, in my health, and other aspects of my life. I will continue to trust the process (improving his numbers) and set goals for myself, which includes competing for the NMI in the future," Izuka said. (PR)



Brady leads Bucs' rally past Panthers for NFC South title

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Saipan Tribune Sports

2 doctors, 1,095 days

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Jingle Boyz jingle way to men's v-ball championship

In a stunning come-from-behind win, Jingle Boyz jingled their way to the men's volleyball championship after defeating We 9 Kings in the 4th Annual Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament last Friday at the Agape Gymnasium.

The Boyz, which was led by event coordinator En Yang Pang and team captain Mike Omar, Francisco Kumuch, Mokyang Kim, Joel Norita, Jerry Saures, Patricio Blas, and Nak Nakashima clinched the men's division championship after rallying past the Kings in a thrilling finale, 26-



Jingle Boyz players, led by team captain Mike Omar, En Yang Pang, Francisco Kumuch, Mokyang Kim, Joel Norita, Jerry Saures, Patricio Blas, and Nak Nakashima, is the 4th Annual Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament champions after defeating We 9 Kings in three thrilling sets last Friday at the crowded and energetic Agape Gymnasium.

28, 25-23, 15-6.

It was a battle at the net as most of the plays were handled through hard-hit spikes by both team's middle blockers—Nason Simon—who was always accurately and smoothly set up by setter Sui Yi of the We 9 Kings, and Kumuch—set up mostly by Omar of the Jingle Boyz.

In the first set, the Jingle Boyz fumbled the win as it was a back and forth rally for the first to win in a deficit of 2 points; an unhittable return coupled with a failed block at-

tempt by the Jingle Boyz on a rocket spike by Simon handed the first win to the Kings.

Then, the Jingle Boyz set up their plays for redemption as they were more grounded and more solid with their communication in the second set. The ball whizzed back and forth from a close contact war waged at the net with powerful spikes, but there were also moments of silence during the quiet plays that juked both sides and buckled knees.

The boom of spikes kept coming and one would miss them if they had blinked in

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Ketola, Tan keep 1-mile run supremacy



Tan



Ketola

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REPORTER

Keith Ketola and Tania Tan ended the year with a bang as they ran the fastest mile in their respective divisions on New Year's Eve last Saturday from the Buddhist Temple in Marpi to the former Marianas Resort & Spa.

Run Saipan's second 1-mile race, dubbed Run from '22 Mile Race, saw not only the course record broken, but also many personal bests.

Ketola dashed through the finish line with an almost 4-minute mile—4:14—and shaving off 31 seconds from his 2021 course time of 4:45.

Tan clocked in at 5:06, 43 seconds faster than her 2021 time of 5:59.

Behind Ketola was Dev

Bachani with a 4:53 mile, with Heimanarii Lai San just two seconds after with a 4:55 mile to complete the Top 3.

Tan, meanwhile, finished sixth overall and top among the women and was followed by Guam's Sharon Hawley with a time of 5:24 and Tiana Cabrera completing the women's Top 3 with a time of 6:03.

Ketola said that he loved the slight downhill course up north, which was dif-

ferent from the course in 2021 which snaked through Beach Road.

For this race, he said "I feel good. It was a lot of fun. They set up a downhill course for it so that definitely takes probably at least 10 seconds off your time. So, I know everyone pretty much ran their PRs today. So it was a great race, a great event."

While this was not Ketola's 1-mile personal best, he did say that "it's definitely the fastest time I've run in probably five years," attributing his speed to the help of the downhill course.

He said that this race was "challenging just because it's faster than most. So, like if you're used to running a 5K or 10K and then all of a sudden you have to run a mile downhill, it might be faster than you're used to, but if you train for it, it's actually easier than most other races."

Meanwhile, even though Tan bagged the top runner award in the women's category again this year, she said she just came out to run for fun and support Run Saipan.

"I thought it was interesting because the whole course was downhill which I'd never run a whole course downhill before, so it was fast. And luckily, the wind was pushing us from behind so that also made you go faster. But overall, I liked it."

She said it also her 1-mile personal best and that it was surprising considering that she hasn't done much speed workouts lately, as since she's been

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Izuka: From keeper to powerlifter

From picking a soccer ball to lifting weights.

Clayton Izuka, a former player for the NMI national youth soccer team, is now into powerlifting and looking forward to competing for the islands with his new passion.

"Powerlifting is something that I took first just to find something useful to do in winter time in Michigan. But the more I get to learn about the sport—the techniques and its benefits—the more I get interested into it and decided to focus on it," said Izuka, who is known in NMI soccer history as the only goalie to have

scored in a national team game (his long throw during their Dec. 8, 2013 match against Guam landed and rolled into the goal).

The 21-year-old is a senior at University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance and picked up powerlifting in 2020, but began taking the sport seriously just about a year ago. His commitment to his new sport has produced a personal best of 465 lbs in squat, 285 lbs in bench press, and 500 lbs in deadlift for a total of 1,250 lbs—which is a great number for someone who has limited knowledge

about powerlifting when he started picking up weights. Squat, bench press, deadlift are the three activities under powerlifting

Based on the U.S. Powerlifting Classification and Izuka's weight class (183 lbs/83 kg), his numbers in squat and deadlift are under Class I and his bench press is at Class II. His total lift is also classified under Class II. There are seven levels under the lift classification with International Elite the highest and Class IV the lowest. Classifications are in the raw category, which is the type of lifting that does not allow the use of equipment to

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Clayton Izuka in before and after photos. Left photo is taken last Jan. 10, 2022, while the right one was shot yesterday, just about a year after he focused on powerlifting.